

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Euro College

Master Thesis

Caleb Campbell

Russian strategic ambiguity as a tactic for desecuritization: A case study of the Ukrainian conflict.

Supervisor: Eoin McNamara, M.Sc.

Tartu 2015

I have written the Master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

..... (signature of the author and date)

Student's code:

The defense takes place: Tartu, Lossi 36, room 103 on the 29th May 2015

Opponent: Professor Viacheslav Morozov

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the staff, lecturers and teachers at the University of Tartu for all their help, assistance and advice over the past two years during my studies. Your consistent guidance and support throughout my Master's program has made my overseas stay and studies a truly remarkable and unforgettable experience.

I would like to especially thank Mr Eoin McNamara for his guidance, backing and supervision of my Master's thesis, and also Mr Veiko Sepp and Dr Vello Pattai for all their hard work and support in preparing myself and other students for their Master's thesis. I would also like to express my deep appreciation and thankfulness to both Miss Oliivia Vork and Mrs Aigi Hommik, your enduring ability to turn problems into solutions and help everyone in every way you can is really a gift the University of Tartu Euro College could not do without.

Finally, I would like to thank my family in Australia. Without their constant support and help from home, none of this would have been possible. Last but not least, I would also like to give a special thank you to both the Rosenberg and Noodla families of Tartu Estonia, your support and hospitality over the past two years has truly made Tartu a home away from home. Thank you all very much.

Abstract

Following Russia's incursion into Crimea, ambiguous warfare and strategic ambiguity used during the Ukrainian conflict have been cited by NATO as a threat to the future of European security. The use of strategic ambiguity holds many benefits over clear communications, particularly its ability to foster multiple interpretations of and create a united diversity around a specific issue during times of crisis. Within the Copenhagen School of Security Studies and Dr Holger Stritzel's analytical frameworks for securitization and desecuritization, this research asks the question of whether strategic ambiguity can be used as a tactic to influence audiences for the purpose and process of desecuritization. Critical discourse analysis is used in a case study of the Ukrainian conflict, analysing NATO and Kremlin speeches and transcripts, to identify and analyse how Russia has used strategic ambiguity as a tactic for desecuritization in order to influence its targeted audiences. Much focus is also directed towards explaining how strategic ambiguity has benefited Russia's campaign of information and psychological warfare. The outcome of this studied has shown mixed results. The author argues from the position that while Russia has been overall unsuccessful in its attempted desecuritization, strategic ambiguity still serves as an important tactic for influencing and dividing perceptions of targeted audiences for the purpose and process of desecuritization.

Keywords: Strategic ambiguity, ambiguous warfare, securitization, desecuritization, NATO, Russia, information and psychological warfare, strategic communications, influence.

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
1. Concepts and theoretical Approach	12
1.1. Information and Psychological Warfare	12
1.1.2. Russian views on Information and Psychological Warfare	16
1.2. Ambiguous Warfare	18
1.2.2. Strategic Communications	21
1.2.3. Strategic Ambiguity	23
1.3. Securitization and desecuritization as a framework for analysis	25
2. Conceptualisation and Methodology	31
2.1. Research question and case selection	31
2.2. Conceptualisation	32
2.3. Operationalisation	33
2.4. Methodology	36
3. Securitization and desecuritization during the Ukrainian conflict	38
3.1. NATO securitization	38
3.2. Russian desecuritization	42
3.3. Russian securitization	47
3.4. Russian counter securitization	50
4. Results and conclusion	57
4.1. Summary	57
4.2. Results	59
4.3. Recommendations	62
References	64

Abbreviation list

AW – Ambiguous Warfare

BABE – Beliefs, Attitudes, Behaviours and Emotions

CSSS – Copenhagen School of Security Studies

EU – European Union

IAPW – Information and Psychological Warfare

IO – Information Operations

IW – Information Warfare

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

PO – Psychological Operations

PSYOP – Psychological Operations

PW – Psychological Warfare

RT – (Formerly ‘Russia Today’)

U.K. – United Kingdom

US – United States

Introduction

‘Russia's military operation against Crimea relied on ... unconventional warfare as well as cyberattacks and significant information-warfare activity, using conventional media and the Internet to spread its propaganda. This is a 21st-century offensive employing 21st-century tools for strategic deception and calculated ambiguity to achieve Moscow's political goals.’ - NATO supreme allied commander for Europe; General Philip M. Breedlove (2014).

The character and tactics of warfare are subject to consistent change. As technology, doctrine, organisation and societies continue to develop, so does their ability to influence the strategic policy of how wars are fought (Von Clausewitz, Howard, & Paret, 1989, p. 88). These changes have occurred both rapidly and over an extended period of time throughout history, with different forms of warfare accruing specific characteristics and tactics that define them from others.

In more recent times, these changes have been periodised as ‘generations of warfare’. According to Lind, Nightengale, Schmitt, Sutton and Wilson (1989), the transformation of the character and tactics of warfare in the post-cold war era has largely been distinguished by the transition from what is known as third generation to fourth generation warfare, where the character of warfare shifts from state and military based forms of conflict to decentralised forms where there is no clear distinction between war and politics, or soldiers and civilians as the decentralisation of state centred conflict loosens a nation states monopoly on combat forces. Thus the tactics of fourth generation warfare have become characterised by terrorism, amorphous and asymmetrical conflict, the tactical use of non-combatants, networked rather than hierarchical group structures, non-linear pressure tactics, and most importantly, strategic information and psychological warfare (IAPW). While fourth generation warfare places a large emphasis on the decentralisation from state centred forms of conflict, it is important to note that this type of conflict is also employed by states (Hammes, 2007).

One of the key strategies of fourth generation warfare is to collapse or influence the enemy internally, rather than defeat them physically, with targets focusing on the enemy's society as a whole, their culture, popular support for the conflict and resistance to outside influence. Such a strategy is primarily achieved through the increasing power of information. The emergence and continued ascendancy of the internet as the primary medium of information has enabled the exploitation of information content and delivery to a global audience, who are susceptible to influence from highly tailored IAPW campaigns (Hammes, 2007; Lind et al., 1989).

In the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea, and subsequent conflict in Eastern Ukraine, there has been much conjecture as to what the character of this warfare is and what tactics it represents. Berzins (2014) argues that the conflict represents a new generation of warfare, where the main conflict is mental and the objective is to psychologically manipulate and influence the opponent's military and civilian population to support the attacker. He also argues that the enemy of Russia in this context is Western civilization in its entirety. Darczewska (2014) states that Russian cyber and internet warfare are aspects of fourth generation warfare that have evolved from technological and social development. She also states that Russia views information as a dangerous armament in its struggle against the dominance of Western civilisation and liberalism. While there is argumentation in regards to the characteristics of this warfare, there is agreement in regards to its use of information being used as a tactical weapon. This tactic plays a predominant role in influencing the perceptions of targeted audiences using IAPW and strategic communications.

As changes in the character and tactics of warfare occur, it is essential that such changes are identified, analysed and evaluated to ensure that an adversary doesn't gain a tactical or organisational strategic advantage that may be costly or possibly lead to defeat (Lind et al., 1989). By identifying, analysing and evaluating such changes that may pose risks and threats, weaknesses can also be identified where policy changes may be needed to face these new challenges.

Such strategic and tactical changes as the use of strategic ambiguity and ambiguous warfare (AW) have been duly noted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) leaders, with NATO supreme allied commander for Europe General Philip M.

Breedlove (2014) stating that ‘surprise, deception and strategic ambiguity have been adeptly employed by Russia against Ukraine’ and that ‘this strategy, quite simply, has significant implications for Europe's future security’. In a recently released paper by the United Kingdom (U.K.) Defence Committee (2014) of the U.K. House of Commons, it is highlighted that ambiguous warfare tactics are ‘intended to influence the decision making of an adversary by providing that adversary with information that will reflexively lead them to pursue particular courses of action’. It also states that ambiguous warfare and its associated tactics ‘represents the most immediate threat to its NATO neighbours and other NATO Member States’. Ambiguity has played a crucial role in Russia’s conflict with Ukraine, particularly in its use to influence public perceptions. While such tactics are not necessarily new, it can be argued that the successful emergence of strategic ambiguity and ‘ambiguous warfare ‘ as a threat during the Ukrainian conflict has been greatly assisted by the ability to influence individuals through combining uncertainty with both language and action.

As it has been identified that strategic ambiguity and AW are immediate threats to NATO and its member states, there exists a need to develop policies, doctrines and tactics to be able to successfully safeguard NATO and its member states from these potential future threats (General, 2014). Thus this study seeks to contribute to ongoing NATO and military research, by identifying, analysing and evaluating how strategic ambiguity has been constructed as a strategy by Russia during the Ukrainian conflict to influence targeted audiences. This is not a study of AW in its entirety, but rather a study of how Russia has constructed a strategy of strategic ambiguity in order to influence and desecuritize NATO actions and actions by its member states. By understanding how Russia has constructed strategic ambiguity within its political discourse in relation to its actions during the Ukrainian conflict, NATO can be greatly assisted in understanding the character and tactical nature of this threat, thus being better equipped to develop methods and techniques to counter this strategy. Considering the large degree of concern within NATO the Ukrainian conflict has created, this research is significant as it assists in understanding how a certain strategies and tactics can use and neutralise information to influence and affect a nations or organisations ability to respond to certain threats. Given that the Russian Federation is currently suffering from potentially threatening and destabilising economic decline due to Western sanctions, the need and

timeliness of such research is essential in assisting to maintain European peace and security.

The structure for analysis in this study employs the Copenhagen School of Security Studies (CSSS) conceptual framework of securitization and desecuritization. The success of a securitization act being achieved is largely dependent upon the targeted audience being convinced by a securitizing actor that a specific issue represents a real and legitimate security threat to a referent object, by which extraordinary measures need to be taken to solve the perceived problem. Thus by initiating a securitizing move, the justification for security to survive is key to legitimising and mobilising public support for the use of extraordinary measures outside of relative norms (Barry Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21).

Concerning desecuritization, there remains a degree of uncertainty and debate surrounding its conceptual framework. . It has been regarded as the conceptual twin of securitization which counters the process of securitization, delegitimizes and dejustifies its enabled extraordinary measures to resolve a perceived problem, and returns the use of extraordinary measures from emergency politics back into the realm of normal politics and politicization. Thus as the success of both securitization and desecuritization are largely dependent on their ability to influence and convince targeted audiences that emergency measures are either required or not required to resolve a specific issue, the calculated use of language and discourse plays a key role in mobilizing public opinion in favour of either the securitization or desecuritization of a specific issue (Hansen, 2012).

Therefore, when analysing how Russia has constructed the strategy of strategic ambiguity, the CSSS framework for analysis, as well as that proposed by Stritzel (2007) which focuses on the context of the securitization and desecuritization processes, are appropriate as they provide the relevant structure to research how the calculated use of language and discourse has been constructed by Russia in regards to its opposition to NATO's stance of securitization during the Ukrainian conflict. They also assist to identify how Russia has used strategic ambiguity within its political discourse and IAPW campaign to influence NATO member states internally in order to attempt to desecuritize NATO's current stance of securitization.

As the calculated use of language and discourse plays a key role in influencing and mobilizing public opinion in favour of either securitization or desecuritization, the qualitative research method of critical discourse analysis is employed. This method is used to identify the construction of strategic ambiguity in the political discourse between NATO and Russia, and also analyse its relevant context in regards to the Ukrainian conflict.

This research aims to identify how strategic ambiguity can be used as a tactic for desecuritization through its ability to be able to influence targeted audiences. The objective is to analyse where and how Russia has used strategic ambiguity within its language and discourse, to be able to maximise their potential influence over targeted audiences for the purposes and process of desecuritization. Through this analysis, the success of strategic ambiguity as a tactic for desecuritization can be evaluated, and recommendations can be formulated to assist NATO in countering such actions. The results of this research have been mixed. It is argued that strategic ambiguity still serves as important tactic for the purpose and process of desecuritization.

This study is structured in the following four chapters. The first chapter consists of an overview and explains the concepts of this study, including IAPW, strategic communications and the strategy of strategic ambiguity, as well as the theoretical approach of the CSSS framework of analysis for securitization, and desecuritization. The second chapter explains the research methodology of this study and also outlines the main research questions to be answered. The third chapter consists of identifying how the strategy of strategic ambiguity has been constructed within the political discourse of NATO and Russia, and also analyse and evaluate strategic ambiguities' ability to influence European and international audiences to desecuritize in the relevant context through the use of Russia's IAPW campaign. The fourth and final chapter of this study concludes with the results of this research, and also engages in discussion about the possible tactical and policy changes needed to deal with this threat.

1. Concepts and Theoretical Approach

In this chapter, the relevant concepts and the theoretical approach to this study is clarified and explained. This is done by using the most up to date and historically important literature for each topic. The initial purpose of this chapter is to familiarise readers with IAPW and strategic ambiguity as a tactic and a strategy. The objective of this chapter is to highlight and analyse the current debate surrounding the conceptual framework of securitization and desecuritization. The author of this research also uses this chapter to justify the position that the CSSS concepts of securitization and desecuritization serve as an effective framework for the analysis of language and discourse in order to influence. Thus initially, the concepts of IAPW and strategic ambiguity are reviewed, followed by a critical analysis of the current debate surrounding the framework of the concepts of securitization and desecuritization, proceeded by the justification for the use of the CSSS concepts of securitization and desecuritization for the purposes of this study.

1.1. Information and Psychological Warfare

Information warfare (IW) and psychological warfare (PW) are closely related terms. The concept of IW is used to generalise a wide variety of defensive, offensive, operational and tactical measures that use information and communications in order to gain a competitive advantage or information superiority over an opponent. The U.K. Ministry of Defence (2013) defines information superiority as the ‘competitive advantage gained through the continuous, directed and adaptive employment of relevant information principles, capabilities and behaviours’.

As IW includes a wide variety of operational and tactical measures for both defensive and offensive operations, including command and control warfare, intelligence based warfare, electronic warfare, psychological warfare, hacker warfare, economic information warfare and cyber warfare (Libicki, 1995), there has been much academic

debate as to what the term means and how it should be defined. Historically, IW is rooted in its military and conflict origins. Thomas Rona , an early proponent of IW who is credited with coining the term, defines it as ‘the strategic, operation, and tactical level competitions across the spectrum of peace, crisis, crisis escalation, conflict, war, war termination, and reconstitution/restoration, waged between competitors, adversaries or enemies using information means to achieve their objectives’ (Stephenson & Gilbert, 1999, p. 7). But as Libicki (1995) states, such a definition is far too broad, can be used to describe virtually any environment, and fails to conceptually delimit IW.

In noting this broadness in the conceptual basis of IW, particularly its fusion with cyber systems and the ever expanding organisational actors who use it, Williams (2010) argues that the essence of IW is about ‘using information to make decisions and for the adversary, trying to influence, deny, or disrupt information used in decision making processes. This is the fundamental objective of information warfare as decision making is dependent on the quality, amount and correctness of the information available at the time the decisions are made’. By focusing on the information component in describing the objective of IW, Williams (2010) description of what IW is provides clarity in understanding this broad concept. While the warfare component of IW is quite broad in its application, the fundamental use of information as a potential tactic or weapon to affect decision making accurately portrays how information is used in competitive and conflict environments to achieve a strategic advantage.

Hutchinson and Warren (2001) expand further on the notion of information as the primary focus of IW, stating that ‘protagonists can attempt to directly alter data or to deprive competitors of access to it’ and that by using subtler techniques such as language, ‘the way the data is interpreted can be changed by altering the context that it is viewed’. Hutchinson (2002) further devolves on this idea by explaining the relationship between data, information and knowledge. He argues that data describes the attributes of things, objects or scenarios, and that knowledge is the mindset of individuals which has been shaped by personal experiences. Information is the product of interpreted data within the bounds of one’s own knowledge. Thus by manipulating the data, or changing the context or perception in which it is interpreted by the

individuals knowledge, information can be denied, altered or manipulated to meet IAPW objectives (Figure 1).

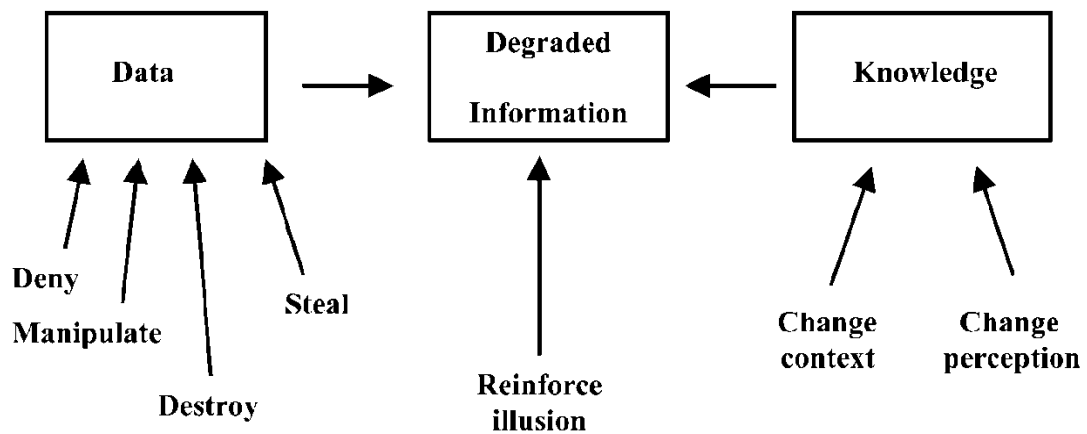


Figure 1: Result of manipulated data and knowledge on information (W. Hutchinson, 2002).

This framework explains how information is the primary focus and weapon of IW. Yet Hutchinson (2002) fails to successfully delimit the concept of IW. While he argues the relevance of the concept in an individual, commerce, governance and military context, the manipulation of data or knowledge can be used in any environment, from a personal argument to a warfare scenario. This raises the question as to what constitutes a state of warfare in which information transcends from being used to gain a competitive edge to being used to meet objectives in conflict scenarios.

As Arquilla (1999, p. 384) states, ‘since the introduction of information warfare, the concept has evolved and broadened to include activities that, while information-driven, are not considered warfare’. This has led to the emergence of the view that such activities can be categorised into two distinct groups. Information Operations (IO), which can be viewed as IW operations and tactics during times of peace, competition, or prior to the emergence of hostilities, and IW, which can be viewed as IW operations and tactics during times of war to meet specific conflict objectives and achieve information superiority (Arquilla, 1999, p. 384; Treadwell, 1998). While the categorisation of these two concepts does not define what constitutes a state of IW, they do characterise the difference of what can be considered IW and IO.

According to Treadwell (1998), there is no clear criteria to judge as to what constitutes IO and a state of IW. While more traditional warfare concepts such as a declaration of war may serve to effectively delimit IO and IW, the reality and character of fourth generation warfare operates outside of such traditional notions. The ability of combatants to blend in with civilians and non-combatants, and the tactics they use continues to create uncertainty and blur the distinction between civil society and the reach of military responsibility (Taddeo, 2012). Although there still remains questions and difficulty in defining and delimiting IW, for the purposes of this research, IW is defined as 'Information Operations conducted during time of crises or conflict to achieve or promote specific objectives over a specific adversary or adversaries' (Jones, Jones, Kovacich, & Luzwick, 2002, p. 591).

Psychological Warfare (PW) or Psychological Operations (PO) is considered a subset of IW and IO, which focuses on influencing individuals beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and emotions (BABE) through the strategic and calculated use of information, language and discourse. While it could be argued that both terms could be characterised and attempted to be delimited similarly to IO and IW, they are used synonymously. They are more traditionally known as propaganda. Whereas violent forms of warfare focus on behaviour modification through conflict, PO (or PW) focus on behaviour modification through influence (Schmid, 2005). According to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (2010), PO can be defined as 'planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behaviour of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals'. For this to be accomplished, it is stated that PO 'must have a clearly defined mission, the ability to analyse and evaluate targets and their effects, a reliable media transmission, and a rapid ability to implement their activities. PSYOP (Psychological Operations) depend on communications to ensure proper execution of the mission and objectives. This is accomplished by command and control, preplanning, and support from all levels of the chain of command' (Staff, 2003). As PO are dependent on reliable media transmissions, it can be argued that the use of such strategic foreign language media as RT is essential in communicating PO objectives aimed at influencing foreign audiences.

The use of strategically placed media in this regard allows a state, organisation or group to convey specific messages containing manipulated data, and to alter the context and perception of information for target audiences to meet specific IAPW objectives (W. Hutchinson, 2002). By supplying a consistent stream of manipulated and altered information, largely focusing on news that projects anti-Western views, sentiment and interests, RT effectively represents Russian government interests and operates in unison with its foreign policy objectives. This allows the media network to be used as an operational arm of Russia's IAPW campaigns to influence global opinions and perspectives in order to be more aligned with Russia's interests (Bidder, 2013).

Such is the power of RT's ability to communicate influence, and affect the BABE's of its audiences, that in regards to Russia's annexation of Crimea during the Ukrainian conflict, Lithuania minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevicius stated;

'Russia Today's propaganda machine is no less destructive than military marching in Crimea.' (Linkevicius, 2014)

Thus it can be argued that due to RT's financing and intimate relationship with the Russian government, along with its consistent reporting of anti-Western news and promotion of Russian interests, the media organisation is used as a tool by the Russian government to achieve strategic IAPW objectives. Due to its immense international popularity on the internet and its social reach, RT has the ability to influence large foreign population groups. For the purposes of this research, PO is defined as by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (2010).

1.1.2. Russian views on Information and Psychological Warfare

The concept of modern IAPW has been a developing one in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. While traditional propaganda and information techniques have existed for some time, the notion of the use of IAPW as strategic assets in conflict scenarios has largely re-emerged in parallel with the emergence of the internet. This is evident in both the first and second Russian – Chechen War, with the strategic use of the internet by Chechen forces being able to rapidly outmanoeuvre Russian information sources. This

forced then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to seriously consider the role of IAPW and the cyber arena in deciding the outcome of future conflicts, stating that ‘we surrendered this terrain some time ago ... but now we are entering the game again’ (Giles, 2011). In response to Chechen successes in breaking the Russian information blockade over the conflicts through the use of the internet to disseminate their information, the Russian government rapidly increased the activities and number of websites of their own news agencies, using IAPW to deliver specific messages to influence targeted audiences (Goble, 1999). The Russian Chechen Wars displayed the immense power of the use of information as a weapon, whereby a small and underdeveloped opponent can achieve information superiority over a world power and much stronger adversary through the strategic use of IAPW (Heickerö, 2010).

The development of IAPW in the Russian Federation since the nineties has progressed along a different definitional and categorisation path than in the West. Whereas Western concepts of IW have focused on a wide variety of operational and tactical measures for both defensive and offensive operations as highlighted by Libicki (1995), and are categorised into the groups of simply ‘assigned and supporting capabilities and activities’ (Tatham, 2013), Russia’s approach to IAPW has been categorised into two distinct groups, information technical and information psychological operations (T. Thomas, 2014). In 1995, an officer from Russia’s General Staff Academy defined IW as;

‘Information warfare is a way of resolving a conflict between opposing sides. The goal is for one side to gain and hold an information advantage over the other. This is achieved by exerting a specific information/psychological and information/technical influence on a nation's decision-making system, on the nation's populous and on its information resource structures, as well as defeating the enemy's control system and his information resource structures with the help of additional means, such as nuclear assets, weapons and electronic assets’ (Aldis & McDermott, 2004, p. 209; T. L. Thomas, 1999).

This categorization highlights the prominence of PO within the development of Russian IAPW theory. Such is the importance of PO within Russian political and military IAPW thinking, that information and psychological operations are considered independent

forms of conflict activity from the technical aspects of IAPW, whereby the Russian state is actively seeking ways to construct and win information psychological engagements to both defend their state and influence the decision making processes and populations of others (T.L. Thomas, 1999). Thus it can be argued the Russian state maintains a stronger emphasis on information superiority, whereby more importance is placed in its IAPW theory on influencing decision makers, targeted audiences and maintaining a position of information dominance (Tatham, 2013).

Russia was considered successful in its war with Georgia in 2008 in the context of conventional operations, however the Russian state and military was considered unsuccessful and inefficient in its IAPW campaign, with its failure to penetrate media narratives both within Georgia and the international community arguably contributing to their lack of success (Giles, 2011). As NATO states and their partners are highly concerned in regards to both Russian conventional and IAPW successes in the Ukrainian conflict, this raises two critical questions regarding the development of Russia's IAPW theory. If the Russian state has gone from being unsuccessful and criticised, to being successful and regarded as an immediate threat in its application of IAPW operations in the space of six years between the Georgian and Ukrainian conflicts, what has changed in Russia's approach to modern warfare and its IAPW operations, and how are they constructing their information psychological engagements to achieve success in influencing the decision makers, decision making processes and populations of others?

1.2. Ambiguous warfare

As the character and tactics of warfare are continuing to evolve at an increasingly rapid pace, there is much debate as to both what the character of modern wars represents and how they are conceptualised. Many argue that modern warfare has evolved beyond fourth generation warfare to fifth, sixth and new generations of war (Bērziņš, 2014; FitzGerald, 1994; G. Friedman, 2007; Hammes, 2007). However as new forms and generations of warfare continue to develop and their significance is debated, previous generational warfare continues to be used around the world, depending on the level of

social and technological development of a society, and the associated development of doctrine and organisation by their states, militaries and representatives. Given the character of and tactics used by Russia in the Ukrainian conflict, it can be argued that this war can be characterised as a fourth generational war (Kipp, 2014). However this does not mean that tactics and strategies cannot evolve and be used in this type of warfare, nor other strategies and tactics be used from different generations. Hammes (2007) defines fourth generation warfare as ‘uses all available networks - political, economic, social and military to convince the enemy's political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit’. Thus as fourth generation warfare places emphasis on the ability to influence the policies of decision makers, IAPW plays a key role in achieving objectives in this type of conflict.

In regards to Russia’s approach to its conflict in Ukraine, both changes to its conventional and IAPW doctrine and organisation since the Georgian war have been in the process of transformation. Russian has recently embarked on a military modernisation programme that has focused on developing its conventional and IAPW capabilities, as well as its strategic doctrine and organisation due to the exposure of serious failures experienced during the 2008 Russian Georgian war, especially in regards to the military’s organisational and technological capabilities. While such investments have dramatically improved Russia’s military capabilities, its relative conventional military weakness in comparison with the NATO alliance has pushed Russian military modernisation towards developing new and less conventional strategies and tactics for warfare (Committee, 2014).

This is highlighted in their conflict with Ukraine. When compared with the Georgian War of 2008, the Russian military has upgraded its approach to modern warfare, from conventional third generation warfare tactics and strategies, to a more modernised and innovative fourth generation warfare approach that places a large emphasis on asymmetric and IAPW. According to Russian military Colonel Sergei Chekinov and retired Lieutenant General Sergei Bogdanov (2013), the rules of warfare in the modern era have changed significantly, and non-military tactics have come to play a much greater role in achieving strategic and political objectives, often surpassing the

importance of traditional military conduct. They argue that warfare has expanded from the traditional theatres of air, sea and land conflict, to incorporate the new environment of information, whereby without achieving information superiority over the opponent, no strategic or political objective can be achieved.

Asymmetric warfare can be described as ‘a conflict in which the resources of two belligerents differ in essence and in the struggle, interact and attempt to exploit each other's characteristic weaknesses. Such struggles often involve strategies and tactics of unconventional warfare, the weaker combatants attempting to use strategy to offset deficiencies in quantity or quality’ (Hyslop, 2014, p. 137; Tones, 2004). The term is closely related to and often used to describe fourth generation warfare. Both asymmetric warfare and fourth generation warfare are largely representative of the continuing strategic trend of 21st century warfare whereby the importance of IAPW, influence, the development of non-conventional strategies and tactics, the non-distinction of battlefields and the non-military aspects of war are continuing to challenge political and military thinking in how to construct and conduct 21st century warfare campaigns (Frunzeti, 2013). Gerasimov (2013) argues that the character and tactics of asymmetric warfare and the growing warfare trends of the 21st century are supplemented by the strategy of concealment in the conduct of special forces and informational conflict, where the open use of military forces, often under the pretence as peacemakers are used only at strategic instances or to finalise the conflict. As both the concealment of military actions and the use of IAPW to confuse and influence an enemy are key elements of 21st century warfare, the importance of the use of IAPW and strategic communications in order to influence and to meet strategic and political objectives, as in the case of the annexation of Crimea, cannot be understated in the construction and conduct of 21st century conflict (Bērziņš, 2014).

The combination of the use of asymmetric and fourth generation warfare, military concealment, disorganisation and confusion of the enemy, and a large emphasis on IAPW as witnessed in the Ukrainian conflict, has led to this type of conflict being labelled as a new type of warfare, termed as Ambiguous Warfare (AW). In his oral disposition before the UK House of Commons defence committee, Institute for Statecraft director Chris Donnelly describes AW as;

‘a form of warfare that integrates the use of conventional and unconventional force; integrates the use of force with non-military tools of war—cyber, economic, political; integrates the whole with an immensely powerful information warfare programme; and is backed up by an ideology. This is a change in the nature of conflict. The aim of the whole operation is to break the integrity of the state—in this case, Ukraine— before there is any need to cross its borders with an invasion force and trigger an Article 5 situation, were it a NATO country. So we are seeing a form of warfare that is operating under our reaction threshold’ (United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee, 2014).

This is not the first time that the term AW has been used. In 1998 at a United States army war college conference discussing land power and AW in Colombia, AW was described as a strategic war that ‘inherently makes building a consensus on who is the enemy and a proper strategy to defeat him an exceedingly complex task’ (Downes, 1999). However it can be argued that its use by Russia during the Ukrainian conflict is the first time AW has been used with such successful tenacity. Through the use of AW, Russia was successfully able to annex the Crimea peninsula, without either a full scale military invasion and without even a single casualty. It was also able to do so with minimal resistance from both NATO and the international community. Such actions raise serious questions in regards to how Russia has constructed its AW and IAPW campaigns to be able to influence its targeted audiences to meet its strategic objectives. The ability of Russia to take over the territory of another country without a major war and with minimal resistance highlights the intensity and success of Russia’s PO.

1.2.2. Strategic communications

Understanding, engaging and influencing key and targeted audiences is crucial in the success of achieving strategic objectives in a state or groups IAPW campaign. By focusing on the cognitive context of an information environment, through the use of strategic communications, targeted audiences can be more successfully engaged and influenced by understanding their culture, BABE’s, and whom they trust. Whilst similar to IAPW, the concept of strategic communications focuses more on influencing

population groups whereas IAPW focuses more on influencing decision makers and decision making processes. Messages to be interpreted are not only in the form of verbal and visual communications, but also in the actions of a state or group, as these can also influence the BABE's of targeted audiences (Murphy, 2008).

NATO defines the concept of strategic communications as 'the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops), and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate – in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims' (Reding, Weed, & Ghez, 2010). The objective of strategic communications is to influence targeted audiences into cognitively accepting a specific narrative and engaging a state or groups way of thinking, thus allowing them to achieve political and strategic objectives legitimately and with the consent and support of specific population groups (Figure2) (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007). Thus in this context, IAPW is considered a subset of strategic communications that assist in creating and developing influence through systemic persuasion to achieve an overall strategic or political goal.

Through the use of IAPW, strategic communications, and AW, a paradigm has been constructed by Russia in its conflict with Ukraine whereby the strategy of ambiguity has served as the driving force behind the development of the Russian states influence over domestic and foreign audiences to achieve their strategic objectives. The creation of this paradigm has been aided by the importance Russia places on its PO, and their use of strategic communications and IAPW, using 21st century warfare tactics within the information environment to justify and legitimize their actions, and dejustify and deligitmise those of NATO.

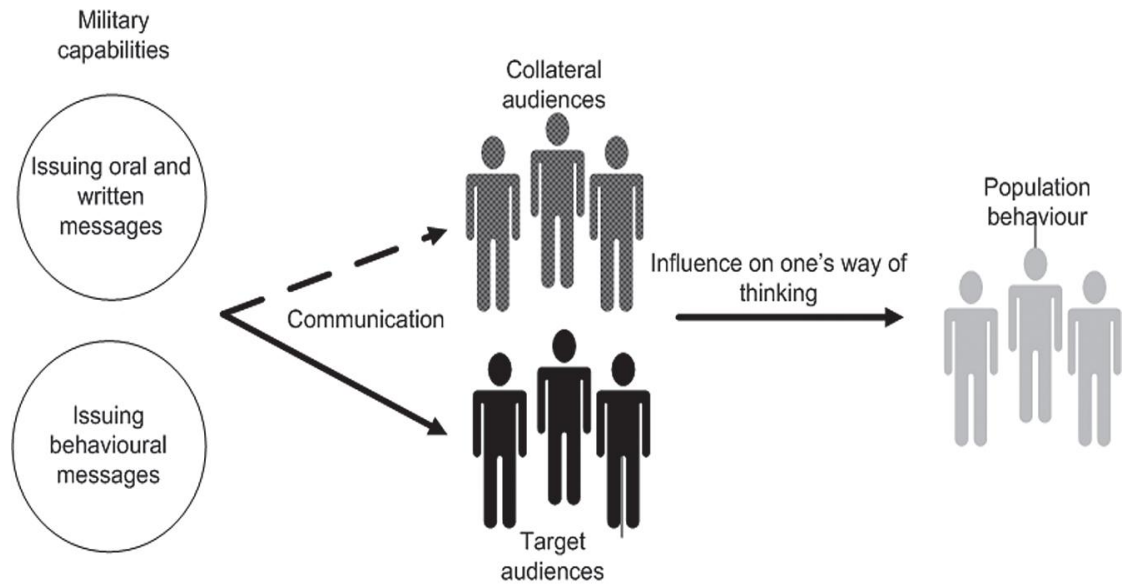


Figure 2: Influencing populations through strategic communications (Reding, Weed & Ghez, 2010)

Thus if strategic ambiguity has been used as a key communications approach in Russia's IAPW and strategic communications campaigns during the Ukrainian conflict (Schenk, 2014), this raises the question as to how ambiguity is able to be used to create influence and persuade population groups into cognitively accepting specific narratives and engaging a state or groups point of view in a given scenario. If strategic ambiguity has played a key role in this conflict, how has it been constructed within Russia's IAPW and strategic communications campaigns, conducted within AW, and been able to influence and persuade targeted audiences?

1.2.3. Strategic Ambiguity

The use of language and persuasive argumentation serve as powerful tools when vying for influence over social control, particularly when they are expressed by politicians, media, academics, journalists and individuals from a reliable background who have accumulated discursive power through symbolic capital and credibility. Those with the power to influence both the consensus, justification and legitimisation of discourse, or its dissent and rejection, do so through their ability to engage and influence targeted audiences to establish cognitive social control through strategic communications and

discourse (Van Dijk, 1989). When attempting to influence large population groups, careful thought must go into constructing a strategy that can engage a wide variety of views. Also understanding the culture and BABE's of targeted audiences allows those with symbolic capital and credibility to construct language and discourse that are more likely to influence to meet strategic objectives.

In the Ukrainian conflict, the strategy that has been used in the construction of language and discourse has been that of strategic ambiguity (Breedlove, 2014; Schenk, 2014). The communication theory of strategic ambiguity was developed from the need to develop strategic communications for resilient organisations under difficult and uncertain conditions (Goodall, Trethewey, & McDonald, 2006). Strategic ambiguity is understood to be the purposeful use of ambiguous language that avoids specifics in order to accomplish organisational goals (Eisenberg, 1984). Whereas clarity is effective as a communication strategy when the goal is to be clear, there are many incidences in which ambiguity can serve a greater purpose in strategic communications, particularly during times of rapid change and perceptual uncertainty (Leitch & Davenport, 2007). According to Eisenberg (1984), strategic ambiguity is useful as a communications strategy to foster unity among diversified viewpoints. Ambiguity allows for multiple interpretations of language or discourse, allowing individuals to maintain their individual interpretations while believing that others are in agreement with them. Strategic ambiguity is also helpful in addressing difficult issues when potential situations hinder the possibility for successful persuasion 'by limiting disagreement and getting people to focus on the more abstract concepts on which they agree instead of the specific points upon which they disagree' (Paul & Strbiak, 1997). It provides an apparatus whereby a variety of individuals from a variety of different ideological and political backgrounds can all be engaged and influenced through intentional uncertainty. It also aids the preservation and amplification of existing impressions, where ambiguity encourages individuals to select information which is consistent with their initial assessments (Eisenberg, 1984).

Strategic ambiguity preserves privilege positions, facilitates organisational change, also allows those with symbolic capital and credibility to engage in deniability (Sim & Fernando, 2010). By engaging in deniability, credible and authoritative figures are able

to maintain their privileged positions, and preserve potential future options in relation to strategic objectives (Eisenberg, 1984; Paul & Strbiak, 1997). This is an important aspect of strategic ambiguity, particularly when it is combined with one's own actions, such as the Russian states use of AW in Ukraine. Through the use of deniability in strategic ambiguity, ones actions can be disguised as non-existent, or that not of their own, permitting them to play the innocent and mediating party in a conflict scenario, whilst allowing them greater flexibility in achieving their strategic objectives.

Through the use of strategically ambiguous communications, by understanding the culture and BABE's of targeted audiences, those with symbolic capital and credibility such as politicians, military, media, academics and journalists are capable of engaging and influencing individuals through language and discourse to influence their understanding of specific events, which helps stakeholders meet their strategic objectives (Van Dijk, 1989; Goodall, Trethewey, & McDonald, 2006). However such a strategy is not one that is used without caution. When using strategic ambiguity in a political or military context, such a strategy can be risky as it can often lead to the misinterpretation of a state's intentions, and possibly lead to actions that impede their strategic objectives (Benson & Niou, 2000). Thus when using strategic ambiguity, careful thought must go into how the strategy is constructed and implemented to maintain a degree of uncertainty without misdirecting an opponent's actions and reaction. Such a strategy has the power to influence large and diverse population groups, particularly during times of crisis where public opinion can be more easily influenced to become divisive, such as the Ukrainian conflict.

1.3. Securitization and desecuritization as frameworks for analysis

With the emergence of the theory of securitization, research into security has become one of the most dynamic and disputed disciplines in the study of international relations (M. C. Williams, 2003). The CSSS framework for analysis has broken away from traditional realist concepts of security that focus on power politics and militarised threats to security, by focusing on socially constructed discourse and language that are used to understand how the dynamics of security are discursively constructed (Fako,

2012). Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) describe securitization as an 'extreme version of politicisation', whereby language is used to transform and frame specific issues as above and beyond the rules of the normal realm of politics and into emergency situations that need to be addressed so as to ensure state or group survival. Buzan and Waever (2003, p. 491) define securitization as 'through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat'.

Securitization takes a constructivist approach to security and defines it as 'speech acts', which frames specific issues as security threats through the use of language and discourse. It contains three key points of reference; a referent object or thing of which is threatened, a securitizing actor who engages in securitizing speech acts and defines specific threats, and a targeted audience of which chooses to either accept or reject an attempted act of securitization. By talking security through speech acts, an actor can initiate a 'securitizing move' through their presentation of a specific issue as an existential threat. This is an attempt to 'securitize' a specific issue by moving it away from the realm of normative politics and public debate, and give the specific issue special status where its resolution can be achieved through extraordinary means and not be restricted by common practice. The crucial element in progressing from a securitizing move into an act of securitization lay in the ability of securitizing actors to influence targeted audiences into accepting specific issues as existential threats (Barry Buzan et al., 1998; McDonald, 2008). The audience is crucial in this aspect, as without their consent of the securitizing move, or their rejection of it, an act of securitization can be difficult to legitimise and justify.

Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) argue that securitization is to study 'the power politics of a concept', where securitization studies aims to gain an 'understanding of who securitizes (actors), on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results, and, not least, under what conditions' (Figure 3). They also note the power of social contexts and 'facilitating conditions' that can potentially determine the success of a securitizing move. These 'facilitating conditions' are divided into internal and external elements that either facilitate or hinder an act of securitization. The internal

element relates to the role of the grammar of security in following the speech act, whereas the external elements relates to the social conditions that give a securitising actor a position of authority, and the nature of the threat that can either be perceived as threatening or non-threatening (Barry Buzan et al., 1998; Stritzel, 2007).

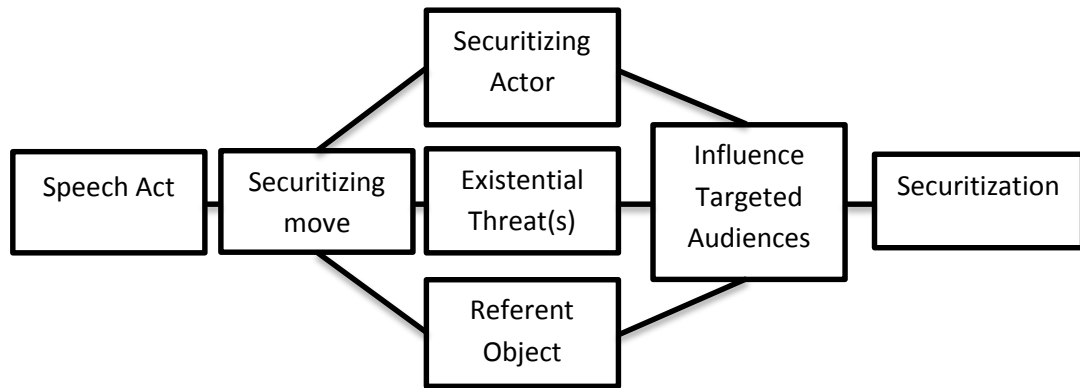


Figure 3: Process of Securitization

However it has been argued (Balzacq, 2005; Stritzel, 2007) that the CSSS framework for analysis is lacking in its ability to analyse the contextual environment of securitization acts, placing too much emphasis on speech acts and neglecting the external social context within which acts of securitization occur. Balzacq (2005) argues that securitization occurs within a ‘configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction’. Stritzel (2007) further states that the CSSS framework for analysis ‘refuses to conceptualize securitizing speech acts and securitizing actors as embedded in broader social and linguistic structures’. Alker (2006) and McDonald (2008) go further, arguing that the analysis of securitization and desecuritization should take into account the historical context of the society involved, and seek to understand why such historical contexts resonate within particular constituencies. Whereas the CSSS takes an internalist position and argues that speech acts modify their contextual environment, their critics argued from an externalist position whereby security language, discourse and narratives have to engage the wider social and historical context within which they occur in order to influence targeted audiences (Balzacq, 2005).

Thus while the securitization framework for analysis proposed by Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) may serve the initial purpose of identifying the construction of

securitization and desecuritization through the internalist elements of ‘facilitating conditions’, further analysis of the externalist elements is needed to determine the wider influential power of the ambiguous language and discourse through the given context of a specific securitization scenario. By integrating the analysis of both the internal and external ‘facilitating conditions’ of securitization or desecuritization acts, the influential power of ambiguous language, discourse and action can be understood from a much more holistic perspective, and strengthen the original CSSS literature in relation to how a specific context can have greater influence on a targeted audience (McDonald, 2008). Stritzel (2007) proposes such an analytical framework of analysis from an externalist perspective, which focuses on the forces of ‘the performative force of articulated threat texts, their embeddedness in existing discourses, and the positional power of actors who influence the process of defining meaning’ (Figure 4). Such a framework takes into account the historical and social context of a society where an act of securitization may occur, and argues that this context influences the performative force of threat texts, the positional power of securitizing actors, and thus the securitizing language and discourses ability to influence targeted audiences. Therefore in analysing Russian strategic ambiguity as a tactic for desecuritization, both frameworks for analysis serve the purpose of identifying the influential power of strategic ambiguity, from both the perspectives of the speech act and the socio historical context.

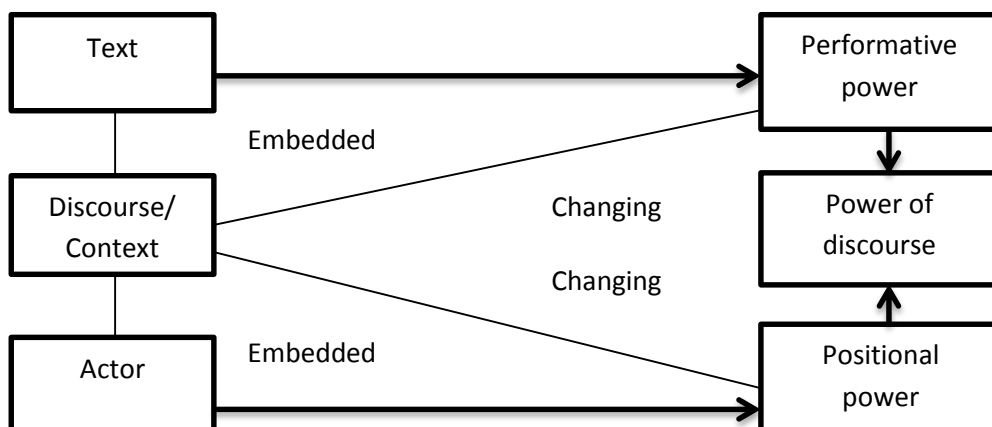


Figure 4: Stritzel's (2007) framework for securitization

Whereas the CSSS concept of securitization has been well established as a constructivist research framework for analysis, one of its other foundational concepts, desecuritization, continues to remain largely unspecified, debated and lacking

consolidation in regards to its conceptual framework (Aradau, 2004; Hansen, 2012; Taureck, 2006).

Desecuritization as a framework for analysis has often been considered as a conceptual twin of securitization, which operates to bring a securitized issue back from the realm of emergency politics and means of resolution to return to normal politics and politicization (Hansen, 2012; Aradau, 2004; Taurek, 2006). A desecuritizing actor argues to influence a targeted audience that either there is no threat, the threat is not what has been argued, or that the proposed threat is non-threatening and can be managed within the realm of normal politics (Salter, 2008). Huysmans (1998) argues that desecuritization is about the unmaking of constructed threats that are institutionalised as perceived public problems. However as Waever (1995) shows, desecuritization can also be achieved through preventing the emergence of perceived threats, by either maintaining problems below a certain threshold or creating a securitizing speech act failure, desecuritizing potential acts of securitization before they are institutionalised. From this perspective, desecuritization, rather than simply being seen as the conceptual twin to securitization, can be seen as its opposing mechanism, which aims to oppose the greater process of securitization by rejecting the legitimisation and justification of perceived threats within a given threat defence sequence.

An actor can also engage in alternative securitizations that have a desecuritizing effect, such as counter securitization, where a given threat can be eclipsed or replaced by the importance of another (Santos, 2010). Watson (2009) defines counter securitization as ‘where societal or political elites identify another referent object as threatened, either by the emergency measures implemented by the security provider to counter act the initial threat, or by some other development’. In highly politicized conflict environments where distinctly opposing positions are held by elites, counter securitization emerges when an opposing securitization actor seeks to influence the securitized audiences of the other that another threat poses the greater threat, to either create internal opposition amongst audiences who may not agree with the act of securitization, or to replace the initial threat of an act of securitization in order to desecuritize a specific issue.

Aradau (2004) also argues that desecuritization is also about the questioning of conventional narratives that are held as a ‘regime of truth’, whereby the construction,

legitimization and justification of desecuritizing narratives to meet strategic objectives are just as important as a return to the normalisation of politics (Jasper, 2013, p. 195; Balzacq, 2014, p. 85). Thus by unmaking, opposing, replacing, or preventing the emergence of these perceived threats, desecuritization must be able to influence both the public and political cognitive psyche in order to return a specific issue from emergency politics back into the realm of normal politics, politicization and public debate.

Much of the current research into the strategies of desecuritization has focused on the social theories of constructivism, deconstructivism and objectivist approaches and how these are applied within either a more moderate management or more assertive transformative way of desecuritizing (Balzacq, 2014, pp. 104- 109; Huysmans, 1995). According to Hansen (2012), there are four distinct strategies in the process of desecuritization; Change through stabilisation that takes a constructivist approach in which the opposing parties of a conflict recognise each other as legitimate and slowly move the language and discourse surrounding a specific event out of the realm of security, replacement that takes a constructivist approach and replaces one threat with another, rearticulation which takes a deconstructivist approach and casts specific issues in new terms, and silencing which also takes a deconstructivist approach and seeks to desecuritize by avoiding the use of security based language and discourse to either keep an issue out of or remove it from the process of securitization (Hansen, 2012; Balzacq 2014, pp. 104-109). Yet little attention has been paid to how the construction of linguistic communication strategies, such as strategic ambiguity, can be used in order to influence the desecuritization process within these social theories. Little is known about the ability of the strategic use of language to serve as a tactic for desecuritization. This is highlighted by Stritzel (2007), who argues that too little attention is paid in securitization studies to the relationship between securitizing actors and their audiences, and how the performative utterances of their speech acts are able to create meaning and a reality that can successfully engage and influence their audiences. Strategy ambiguity holds many advantages over clear communications in given situations (Eisenberg, 1984). As such its use could prove to be an important tactic in influencing the success of these desecuritization strategies.

2. Conceptualisation and Methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology, questions, data and structure of this empirical research is explained. Firstly, the main research questions, framework, and case study are explained, followed by their conceptualisation and operationalization. Then the research methodology that is used in this empirical research is also explained.

2.1. Research question and case selection

As was established in the previous chapter, the use of strategic ambiguity, implemented through information, language and discourse using IAPW and strategic communications has the ability to serve as an important tactic of desecuritization by influencing the perceptions and BABE's of targeted audiences. The ability to be able to delegitimise and dejustify the process of securitization to targeted audiences, including decision makers and their decision making processes, can potentially determine a securitizing actors ability to either act on or react to perceived threats.

Strategic ambiguity and AW have been cited by NATO officials as a clear danger to European security, and a change in how Russia is conducting its warfare operations in relation to 21st century tactics and strategies, particularly through its use of IAPW and strategic communications. In order to combat this threat, NATO needs to develop the appropriate tactics, doctrine and policies in order to confirm they are capable of ensuring their own security from such a potential threat. By understanding how Russia has used the strategy of strategic ambiguity against NATO in its attempt to influence and desecuritize NATO actors and their actions, NATO can be much better equipped with the appropriate knowledge as to how to defend itself against this threat if it were to occur again in the future or against a NATO member state. Thus in regards to Russia's conflict with Ukraine, two questions need to be answered in regards to how Russia has used strategic ambiguity;

- 1) How has Russia constructed strategic ambiguity in order to attempt to desecuritize NATO's process of securitization against its actions in Ukraine?
- 2) How has strategic ambiguity been used to influence targeted audiences in order to attempt to desecuritize NATO's process of securitization in relation to Russia's actions in Ukraine?

This research aims to answer these questions by analysing the role of strategic ambiguity in the relationship between the desecuritizing actor, Russia, and there targeted audiences, which consists of both a European and international audience. NATO was chosen for this research over Ukraine due to their highly publicised securitizing actions towards Russia, the greater threat a potential conflict between Russia and the NATO alliance poses on the European continent, and the organisation being one of the preferred mediums through which its member states have taken securitizing actions. Also, Russia's desecuritization has a much larger and more generalised target than one specific nation. By evaluating and summarizing the results of the two research questions, this research aims to answer the following main research question;

Research Question: Can strategic ambiguity be used as a tactic to influence targeted audiences for the purpose and process of desecuritization?

2.2. Conceptualisation

Strategic ambiguity is identified as the purposeful use of ambiguous language and discourse that avoids specifics in order to accomplish Russia's strategic objectives (Eisenberg, 1984). Its aim is defined as making decisions acceptable to audiences by creating space within which multiple interpretations may emerge by masking divergence (Denis, Dompierre, Langley, & Rouleau, 2011). This research acknowledges that strategic ambiguity can take many forms on different levels. Such range can lead to most language or text being ambiguous in a given circumstance (Eisenberg, 1984). In

this context, strategic ambiguity is delimited to take three forms. The use of language and discourse which may contain multiple meanings for interpretation, the intentional lack of clarity and meaning in discourse to avoid certainty around specific issues (Hutchby, 2001; Sneijder & Te Molder, 2005), and also the lack of certainty created through action. Therefore strategically ambiguous language and discourse is identified by the lack of its binary opposite, clarity. This is seen in the process of communication, where the sender of a message can use abstract language or a lack of specific detail for the receiver to interpret multiple interpretations, and where the language and discourse used by the sender of the message can contain multiple meanings itself, and allows for the receiver to make multiple interpretations (Eisenberg, 1984). Thus strategic ambiguity resides in both the sender's intentions, and the receiver's interpretation. This research focuses on identifying and analysing the strategically ambiguous language and discourse from Russia during the Ukrainian conflict aimed at desecuritizing NATO's process of securitization against Russia's actions. As desecuritization continues to lack a conceptual framework, for the purposes of this research, it is be defined as 'the management and transformation of issues out of the threat defence sequence into the ordinary public sphere'. How this is achieved focuses on the aspects of desecuritization aimed at creating a failure of the process and act of securitization, and the replacement of threats through counter securitization.

As desecuritization relies on the ability to influence targeted audiences and populations, how strategic ambiguity creates this influence within the processes of desecuritization and counter securitization is the exclusive focus of this research. Influence is defined as 'the power to direct the thinking or behaviour of others usually indirectly' (Influence, 2015). It is achieved through persuasion. Thus by analysing how strategic ambiguity has been used to influence European and international audiences, its effectiveness as a tactic for desecuritization can be identified, analysed and evaluated.

2.3. Operationalisation

Through a case study of the Ukrainian conflict, this research focuses on analysing the relationship between the desecuritizing actor, Russia, and their targeted European and

international audiences. How Russia has constructed the strategy of strategic ambiguity in order to oppose NATO securitization against its actions in Ukraine is assessed by analysing the strategically ambiguous language, discourse and actions it has used in relation to its conflict with Ukraine. This is achieved through using Buzan, Waever and Wilde's (1998) framework for analysis of securitization (Figure 3). The research focuses on highlighting the constructed processes of NATO's act of securitization, Russia's act of securitization, attempted desecuritization and counter securitization. The aim of this section is to analyse how the strategically ambiguous language that has been used by Russia has been constructed for the purposes of desecuritization in order to influence its targeted audiences.

Russia's counter securitization is also analysed to determine the performative force and positional power of its strategically ambiguous counter threat and its related context. This is achieved by expanding upon the framework for analysis proposed by Buzan, Waever and Wilde's (1998) to incorporate Stritzel's (2007) proposed framework for the analysis of securitization. According to Stritzel (2007), this framework understands power as;

'the relatedness of the existing discourse, constituting the performative power and the meanings of security articulations, and the positional power of actors, influencing the process of defining meaning by enacting particular threat texts and/or shaping the existing discursive context. Conversely, the performative force of a threat text can help constitute or change existing discourse coalitions and/or change an existing discourse, thereby reconfiguring existing relations of power. Influencing the process of defining meaning is always marked by acts of translation of a certain threat text into an existing discourse. The better the compatibility of the articulated text/textual structure and the existing discourse (i.e. its 'resonance') and the better the positional power of securitizing actors, the easier it is for them to establish their preferred individual text as a dominant narrative for a larger collective'. (Stritzel, 2007)

Thus Stritzel's (2007) framework for securitization serves as a better model to analyse how strategic ambiguity has been constructed in order to influence and desecuritize through Russia's counter securitization, as it takes into account how the discursive context of securitizing or desecuritizing discourse can affect both the performative

power of articulated threats and the positional power of securitizing actors in a specific context, which contributes to influencing the targeted audiences' beliefs and perceptions. Thus the aim of the analysis of Russia's counter securitization is to determine the influential positional and threat articulation power it creates through relating its language and discourse to a specific context.

In the selection of data sources to be used for this analysis, stakeholder sampling is the chosen method as it involves identifying who the major stakeholders are who are involved in the processes of securitization and desecuritization and how these processes may affect one another (Given, 2008, pp. 698-699). The data to be used in this research is selected from official NATO and Russian government speeches and transcripts. For the purposes of this article, these speeches and transcripts have taken place in the specific time frame of the 23rd of February to the 1st of December 2014. The use of data sampling from NATO and the Russian government also helps improve the credibility of this research by using data from the original sources involved in the processes of securitization and desecuritization. In the selection of text, language and discourse from these sources, those that have been identified as strategically ambiguous and related to the processes of securitization and desecuritization are used for the analysis.

In operationalizing strategic ambiguity, as its aim is defined as making decisions acceptable to audiences by creating space within which multiple interpretations may emerge by masking divergence (Denis, Dompierre, Langley, & Rouleau, 2011), strategic ambiguity is measured by its ability to foster multiple interpretations of key issues at key instances for targeted audiences for the purpose and process of desecuritization. An example of this would be NATO's accusations of Russian military aggression in Ukraine, where through both the intentional lack of clarity and meaning in Russia's discourse about its military actions in Ukraine, uncertainty created through action, and deniability, multiple interpretations of the situation by the audience may emerge, such as the perception that the Russian military is involved in the conflict, is not, or prevailing uncertainty.

As desecuritization can take many forms on different levels, for the purposes of this research, the degree of desecuritization is operationalized through a chain of

measurement proposed by Salter (2008), which focuses on the degree to which policies and opinions accords with the process of securitization;

- To what degree is the issue-area discussed as part of a wider political debate?
- Is the description of the threat as existential accepted or rejected?
- Is the solution accepted or rejected?
- Are new or emergency powers accorded to the securitizing agent?

By analysing the degree of success within the process of securitization through policy and public opinion, the degree and success of an attempted desecuritization can also be determined. The measurement of desecuritization is achieved by focusing on current political discourse within NATO member states, the accordance of new or emergency powers, and public perceptions about the Ukrainian conflict in the countries of Germany and Poland, using empirical research by Poland's Institute of Public Affairs (Kucharczyk, 2015).

2.4. Methodology

The methodology that is used is that of critical discourse analysis. According to Van Dijk (2001), critical discourse analysis is 'a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context'. Fairclough (1995, p.132) defines it as 'discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony'. He also argues that 'critical implies showing connections and causes that are hidden' (Fairclough, 1992, p.9). Discourse analysis has been chosen as it follows the notion in constructivist security studies that securitization is achieved through speech acts. As Balzacq states (2005), discourse analysis alone is ineffective in its ability to identify and analyse either the success or failure of a securitization or desecuritization

act, as it overlooks the power of context in its ability to create influence, and change either the performative power of text, or the positional power of a securitizing or a desecuritizing actor (Stritzel, 2007). However critical discourse analysis sees the use of language as a form of social practice, where the origins of social practices are embedded in specific historical contexts, and are the means through which current social practices are reproduced to serve the interests of competing powers (Janks, 1997). Breeze (2013) argues that critical discourse analysis comprises of two key components; a political problem with the function of power and ideology in society, and how language reveals, contributes to and perpetuates this function. Thus critical discourse analysis can be seen as the analysis of the relationship between language and power (Weiss & Wodak, 2002).

Fairclough (1995, p.57) proposes a three dimensional interrelated framework for critical discourse analysis, which focuses on three distinct levels, using three different kinds of analysis;

- The object of analysis – analysis of language texts (description).
- The process by which the object is produced and received by audiences – processing analysis (interpretation).
- The socio historical context which directs these processes – social analysis (explanation) (Janks, 1997).

Fairclough's (1995) framework focuses on analysing the text and its discursive practice, its communication, and also the socio cultural environment and its relatedness to historical context. Van Dijk (2001) further highlights how critical discourse analysis can be used to focus on how discursive structures influence mental perceptions, stating that 'such discursive influence may be due to context as well as to the structures of text and talk themselves'. Thus due to the function of critical discourse analysis focusing not only on the text, but also its related context, and how these factors can shape mental perceptions, it is a suitable method for the purposes of this research. Therefore the framework of the methodology for this research uses Fairclough's (1995, p.57) three dimensional model for critical discourse analysis.

3. Securitization and desecuritization during the Ukrainian conflict

In this chapter, how NATO has securitized its relations with Russia over their actions in Ukraine, and also how Russia has constructed its strategically ambiguous language and discourse through desecuritization, securitization and counter securitization in order to attempt to desecuritize NATO's position is identified, explained and analysed. The aim of this chapter is to highlight how Russia has used strategically ambiguous language and discourse in relation to its actions or alleged actions in its conflict with Ukraine, in order to attempt to influence targeted audiences and desecuritize NATO's position of securitization. This analysis takes place within both Buzan, Waever and Wilde's (1998), and Stritzel's (2007) frameworks for the analysis of securitization. It is divided into four sections. Initially, how the process of securitization is constructed by NATO is explained, followed by the analysis of the use of strategic ambiguity in Russia's attempted desecuritization. Then how Russia has constructed its process of securitization is explained and analysed, followed by how Russia has constructed strategic ambiguity in its counter securitization in order to influence against NATO securitization.

3.1. NATO securitization

Following the ouster of the former Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovich's government, the events occurring in Ukraine were cited by NATO as Europe's most important security issue (NATO, 2014, February 26th). The instability created by the government overthrow left a power vacuum in the country, ripe of competing ideals largely between Western and Eastern Ukraine in regards to the future direction of the country. The refusal by former Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovich to sign the European Union's association agreement, in favour of closer relations and the possibility of joining the Russian led Customs and Eurasian Economic Union, highlights the competing political, economic, cultural, and ideological division in the country of where its people see their future. Such a power vacuum, fostered by division

and instability, had made Ukraine a favourable environment for the use of IPAW and strategic communications by the competing powers of NATO and Russia, in order to influence the local, regional and international populations to subscribe to their specific viewpoints, interpretations and narratives of the conflict. However the construction of NATO's securitization didn't occur until the subsequent events that unfolded in Crimea.

On the 26th of February 2014, unidentifiable armed men, wearing military style uniforms with military grade weapons, without national emblems or insignias began to occupy key military, political and critical infrastructure within the Crimean peninsula. Their actions would go on to destabilize the peninsula, before the hasty and questionable March 16th Crimean referendum would see the political status of the peninsula move towards independence and joining the Russian Federation. During this crisis, NATO began to develop its securitization threat, initially stating, and then developing its securitizing speech acts and move;

'I have convened the North Atlantic Council today because of Russia's military action in Ukraine, and because of President Putin's threats against this sovereign nation.'
(NATO, 2014, March 2nd).

'Russia's military aggression in Ukraine is in blatant breach of its international commitments and it is a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.'
(NATO, 2014, March 19th)

'Russia's military aggression in Ukraine is the most serious crisis in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Our vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace has been put into question.'
(NATO, 2014, March 21st)

'Russia's military intervention in Ukraine is the most serious crisis in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall.'
(NATO, 2014, April 11th)

The progression of Russia's military threat from that of 'action', to 'aggression' and then 'intervention', highlights the escalation of NATO's securitization language in relation to its progression from a speech act to an act of securitization. From this discourse, the beginnings of the development of a referent takes place, with NATO focusing on the threat posed by the Russian military to Europe, bringing the future of

European security 'into question'. This referent would also expand to include a challenge to 'Euro Atlantic security' (NATO, 2014, March 19th) and a threat to 'an open, rules-based international system, a system based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states' (NATO, 2014, April 4th). Thus the securitization of Russia as a military threat, is not only perceived as one as a threat to European security, but also as one to the hegemonic normative influence of the West based on interpretations of international norms. This is highlighted in NATO's discourse, where it is stated;

'President Putin and his government have shown complete contempt for international law, for international order, and for international institutions. Russia's recent actions in Ukraine are outrageous. They are irresponsible, they are illegal, they are illegitimate.' (NATO, 2014, May 9th).

From NATO's threat and its referent in its attempted securitization, two targeted audiences can be identified; A European audience, through which NATO attempts to legitimise and justify a Russian military threat, and an international one, from which this threat is threatening 'an open, rules-based international system'. NATO uses historical references to elevate the perception of the Russian military threat, with the use of such historical terms and references as 'since the end of the cold war'(NATO, 2014, March 19th), 'change the borders of Europe'(NATO, 2014, April 30th), 'the fall of the Berlin wall'(NATO, 2014, April 11th), 'since the end of World War Two'(NATO, 2014, September 4th), and the 'greatest challenge to Europe's security in a generation'(NATO, 2014, April 8th) used to describe it. Such historical references also serve to justify and legitimise this threat, by invigorating the collective memory of the threat and tyranny posed by the Soviet Union's occupation of Europe in order to mobilise the civilian populace into collective action. As it has been argued (Harris, 2006; Hom & Yamamoto, 1999; Steinberg, 1998), the use of narratives of historical injustices and shared painful collective memories, such as that as the military occupation of Europe by the Soviet Union, are more capable of stimulating collective action than those that simply focus on Russia's current actions. Thus the use of historical references to engage the collective memories of the civilian populace can be

seen as a tactic in order to influence and mobilise greater collective action and support for an act of securitization.

In its act of securitization, NATO has moved towards the enacting of the extraordinary measure of the suspension of NATO and Russian relations, and supporting wider EU and US sanctions. As Ramussen states;

‘there can be no business as usual. So today, we are suspending all practical cooperation with Russia, military and civilian. In the NATO-Russia Council, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and the Partnership for Peace.’ (NATO, 2014, April 1st)

‘I firmly believe that the international community must respond determinedly if Russia were to intervene further in Ukraine; respond through deeper, broader, tougher economic sanctions’ (NATO, 2014, September 4th)

While economic sanctions have been implemented by the EU and US, NATO’s function as an intergovernmental security alliance within these political unions places it in a position to support, recommend and encourage such measures. NATO’s suspension of NATO Russian relations can be considered an extraordinary measure in securitizing against a Russian military threat, with NATO’s actions focusing on maintaining a ‘continuous presence and activity in the air, on land and at sea in the Eastern part of the Alliance, on a rotational basis’ (NATO, 2014, September 5th). With a ‘continuous presence’ on a ‘rotational basis’ in Poland and the Baltic states, it pushes the boundaries of the NATO Russia Founding Act as to what can be considered the permanent basing of substantial combat forces in Eastern Europe (NATO, 1997). Also, the reframing of Russia as an ‘adversary’ from that of a ‘partner’ also brings this act into question (NATO, 2014, April 4th). However the notion of NATO taking a ‘there can be no business as usual’ stance highlights a stance by NATO that could also be considered as extraordinary. By no ‘business as usual’, the combination of the suspension of NATO Russian relations, support for economic sanctions, and changing the perception of Russia from that of a partner to that of a threat, NATO takes the position that normal relations with Russia cannot continue due to the threat its actions in Ukraine poses, and strategically seeks to isolate Russia both politically and economically. Such a position as a ‘no business as usual’ strategic approach can be considered an extraordinary

measure, as the position would be difficult to achieve in normal politics without a securitized threat that required it.

Thus in order to desecuritize NATO's position of securitization against its actions in Ukraine, Russia needs to reduce the perception of its military as a threat to European audiences, threatening 'an open, rules-based international system' to international audiences, in order to move the extraordinary measures of the suspension of NATO Russian relations, its actions of a 'continuous presence' on a 'rotational basis' in Poland and the Baltics, and a 'no business as usual' political and economic strategic approach, out of a threat defence sequence and back into the realm of normal politics, and back to business as usual.

3.2 Russian desecuritization

Whereas NATO supported the new government after the popular overthrow of the leadership of Ukraine, Russia has maintained the position of opposition, with Putin stating;

'First of all, my assessment of what happened in Kiev and in Ukraine in general. There can only be one assessment: this was an anti-constitutional takeover, an armed seizure of power.' (Kremlin, 2014, March 4th)

The Russian view of the new Ukrainian leadership as one that is illegitimate is supported by its continued stance of ambiguity after the election of the new president Petro Poroschenko, refusing to either deny or confirm its stance of officially recognising Ukraine's new leadership. When questioned whether he regards Petro Poroschenko as the legitimate president of Ukraine, Putin states;

'I've already told you and will say it again: we will respect the choice of the Ukrainian people and we will cooperate with Ukrainian authorities.' (Kremlin, 2014, June 4th)

This statement lacks clarity. Putin refuses to mention either Petro Poroschenko, or the Ukrainian government, or whether he recognises the legitimacy of either. Rather he uses such terms as 'respect' for the choice made by people in Ukraine, and to simply

‘cooperate’ not with the government, but rather ‘authorities’. This position refuses to either confirm or deny the recognition and legitimacy of the Ukrainian government and is strategically ambiguous. It lacks both clarity and meaning in sending the message to an international audience as to whether the Russian government does, or does not recognise the current leadership. By taking two different positions, in regards to the Ukrainian ‘people’, and the Ukrainian ‘authorities’, such a statement could be interpreted that Russia will ‘respect’ Ukrainian separatists and ‘cooperate’ with them should they become the new ‘authorities’ in their respective regions against the wishes of the Ukrainian government.

Through its use of strategic ambiguity, Russia preserves both its privileged position and its future options in the conflict (Eisenberg, 1984), allowing it to manipulate the potential outcome by choosing the degree to which it cooperates with the Ukrainian ‘authorities’ and individuals whose ‘choice’ is separatism in the country without having to commit to one or the other. This gives Russia further time to implement its asymmetric and AW tactics in order to attempt to delegitimise and undermine the Ukrainian government’s authority, break the integrity of the state, and to justify their position of support for separatists who are fighting the Ukrainian leadership. This is key in Russia’s process of desecuritization, whereby its ability to delegitimize the Ukrainian leadership, aids the perception that its military actions are not a threat to ‘an open, rules-based international system’, as they came to power against the rules of such a system. If Russia were to confirm or deny its recognition of the Ukrainian leadership, its audience’s would be put into the position of where their interpretation of it would be influenced by either seeing it as legitimate, or as Russia not recognising a democratically elected leadership.

Russia is also able to maintain the existing impression that the Ukrainian leadership is illegitimate within its international audience (Eisenberg, 1984). As Manis (1961, p.76) states, ‘interpreting an ambiguous statement or opinion, the average person would be more strikingly influenced by his own views than he would be when interpreting a non-ambiguous statement’. Therefore Russia’s position that the Ukrainian leadership is illegitimate is able to be maintained within the perceptions of its international audience that believe it is illegitimate, by neither confirming nor denying their recognition of it

(Figure 5). This allows their international audiences to make decisions most consistent with their own beliefs and to make their own inferences. Their audiences beliefs are reinforced by Russia's continued use of IAPW, where the use of language such as 'Kiev' and 'authorities' rather than 'Ukrainian' and 'government' continue to insinuate the illegitimacy of the Ukrainian leadership (RT, 2014, September 30th). Thus through the use of strategic ambiguity, Russia's international audiences who have already been influenced by their IAPW to believe the Ukraine government are illegitimate, are also influenced to maintain such a position through Russia's ambiguous stance in regards to the legitimacy of the Ukrainian leadership after the presidential election of Petro Poroschenko.

Strategic ambiguity 1: Is the Ukrainian government legitimate?		
The Ukrainian government is legitimate.	Uncertain.	The Ukrainian government is illegitimate.

Figure 5: Strategic ambiguity maintains existing impressions (Eisenberg, 1984)

Strategic ambiguity is also visible in regards to NATO's securitized threat of the 'Russian military'. Whereas NATO has securitized against a Russian military threat, the use of discourse, AW and the strategic concealment of its forces as highlighted by Gerasimov (2013) has created ambiguity in regards to whether the Russian military is involved in the conflict or to what degree they are involved. Without visible evidence of either Russian soldiers, or a military build-up on Ukraine's border, it makes it increasingly difficult to determine the difference between soldiers disguised as civilians and civilians themselves, and whether the possibility of a Russian military invasion in Ukraine actually exists. This ambiguity created through action, is supplemented by Russia's use of strategic ambiguity in its discourse. After being questioned about Russia's military action in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, Putin has responded;

'Those were local self-defence units.' (Kremlin, 2014, March 4th).

‘Russia did not annex Crimea by force. Russia created conditions – with the help of special armed groups and the Armed Forces’ (Kremlin, 2014, April 17th)

‘Nonsense. There are no Russian units in eastern Ukraine – no special services, no tactical advisors. All this is being done by the local residents’ (Kremlin, 2014, April 17th)

These statements in regards to the presence of the Russian military in Ukraine lack clarity. Initially Putin denies Russian military involvement in the Ukrainian conflict, before stating that ‘the armed forces’ aided Russia in creating ‘conditions’ for the events in Crimea to occur, then in regards to the conflict in the East of Ukraine, once again denied any involvement in the conflict, claiming them to be ‘local residents’. Thus strategic ambiguity in regards to Russia’s military involvement in Ukraine takes two forms. Ambiguity created through the concealment of Russia’s forces, and ambiguity created through the lack of clarity in Russia’s discourse about their involvement, and their degree of involvement in the conflict. In this case, Russia creates space within the minds of its European audiences from which multiple interpretations about the degree of Russia’s military involvement in the conflict can emerge (Figure 6).

Strategic ambiguity 2: Is the Russian military involved in the conflict?		
The Russian military is involved in the conflict.	Uncertain	The Russian military isn’t involved in the conflict.

Figure 6: Strategic ambiguity allows deniability (Eisenberg, 1984)

Without the clear visibility of Russian troops or a Russian military build-up on the Ukrainian border, strategic ambiguity allows Russia to engage in semi credible deniability (Eisenberg, 1984) due to the inability to decisively prove their military presence, which is masked through their concealment. Through the denial of their involvement, Russia is able to deny they are a military threat in its process of desecuritization, while its support for ‘local’ separatist movements in the country can continue, attempting to achieve favourable outcomes for the Kremlin upon the conflicts resolution. Its rejection of responsibility for the conflict also ensures that Russia can act

both as an aggressor, and a mediator between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian separatist forces.

The denial of Russian troops in Ukraine through strategic ambiguity, and argument that they are 'local self-defence units', takes a distinct relativist approach in Russia's communication (Eisenberg, 1984), where NATO's securitizing threat, and Russia's denial and rearticulation of it, is based upon a battle of subjective perceptions, where the mixing of and inability to identify concealed Russian troops with separatist civilians, allows audiences to subjectively determine themselves what is truth, whether they believe the forces on the ground are Russian troops or 'local residents' based on their own BABE's.

Russia's combined use of strategic ambiguity with visual communications of images is paramount in regards to its ability to influence the perceptions of its European audiences that forces on the ground are local separatist fighters. As research suggests, the combined use of both oral and visual communication in communicating a message has greater influence on an audience's perceptions than an oral message alone (Lester, 2006). In conflict scenarios, there is a strong desire not to communicate images of civilian casualties which may negatively affect a securitized actor's position. Such desires challenge the notion in securitization studies that speech acts are the only key form of communication, particularly considering when the majority of political communication is embedded within media imagery (Williams, 2003). Russia's use of concealment and strategic ambiguity not only denies NATO the powerful visual image of Russian soldiers in articulating their Russian military threat, but also gives Russia the opportunity to communicate images of suffering civilians and local separatists in denying this threat, as well as the perceived threat they face from ideological extremists (RT, 2014, May 3rd). The combining of strategically ambiguous discourse and visual communication in this regard, gives Russia greater communicative influence on its European audiences to persuade them that they are not a threat.

The maintenance of the perception of the Ukrainian leadership as illegitimate and the denial of the presence of Russian troops in Ukraine through the use of strategic ambiguity, aims to create a failure of NATO's act of securitization by fostering multiple interpretations and weakening the perception of the Russian military as a threat to an 'an

open, rules-based international system'. The fostering of multiple interpretations and weakening of these perceptions lays the foundations for the reinterpretation of NATO's act of securitization. As Smith, Atkin and Roznowski (2006) highlight, a desecuritizing actors use of strategically ambiguous messages that lack clarity, creates interpretational diversity from which multiple interpretations of the conflict may occur, and aids the facilitation of inference making by audiences who determine the meaning of messages based on their own BABE's. Thus through the use of strategic ambiguity concerning the legitimacy of the Ukrainian leadership and Russia's military involvement in the conflict, Russia is able to improve its delegitimization and rearticulation (Hansen, 2012) of NATO's act of securitization to an audience that is more diverse in their interpretation of the conflict, and more likely to listen to and subscribe to Russia's interpretation.

3.3. Russian securitization

In seeking to deligitmise and dejustify NATO's act of securitization, Russia focuses on relativizing the notion that its position in the Ukrainian crisis is not as threatening as perceived (Rumelili, 2014, p.156). This is not achieved through the desecuritization of European and international audiences alone, but through the construction of strategic ambiguity within Russia's own act of securitization to have a desecuritizing effect. In these alternative securitizations by NATO and Russia, a struggle for information superiority ensues over the interpretation of threats and referents in order to justify and legitimise each other's position. As Putin states;

'If the current regime in Kiev really did use armed force against the country's population, this is undoubtedly a serious crime against the people ... If the current rulers in Kiev have done it, this turns them into a sort of junta, a clique. First of all, they do not have a national mandate to do it. At best, they have some elements of legitimacy, and only in parliament. All the other authorities are illegitimate for one reason or another.' (Kremlin, 2014, April 24th)

'those who stood behind the latest events in Ukraine had a different agenda: they were preparing yet another government takeover; they wanted to seize power and would stop

short of nothing. They resorted to terror, murder and riots. Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites executed this coup. They continue to set the tone in Ukraine to this day.’ (Kremlin, 2014, March 18th)

‘we can all clearly see the intentions of these ideological heirs of Bandera, Hitler’s accomplice during World War II.’ (Kremlin, 2014, March 18th)

By referring to the Ukrainian government as the ‘regime’, ‘rulers’, ‘junta’ and ‘authorities’ in ‘Kiev’, Russia seeks to express their position to their Russian audiences that the Ukrainian leadership is lacking in legitimacy and authority, the conflict is a civil one, and that the leadership of the government are a localised installed coup that don’t represent the remainder of Ukraine. It also assists in conveying the message that the government should not be recognised, but rather isolated, and seen as a non-representative figure of the wider nation, and one that doesn’t conform with the international norms of governance. By associating the Ukrainian government with ‘nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites’ who have fascist ‘intentions’ who are backed by the US and the West, Russia attempts to stigmatize and relativize the Ukrainian leadership as one that is similar to the historical threat faced by Russia and Europe during World War Two. Putin continues;

‘I will state clearly - if the Crimean local self-defence units had not taken the situation under control, there could have been casualties as well.’ (Kremlin, March 18th)

‘The most obvious risk was that the Russian speaking population was threatened and that the threats were absolutely specific and tangible.’ (Kremlin, 2014, April 17th)

‘But we also thought, and have always hoped, that all native Russians, the Russian-speaking people living in Ukraine, would live in a comfortable political environment, that they would not be threatened or oppressed.’ (Kremlin, 2014, April 17th)

By arguing that ‘local self-defence units’ had prevented ‘casualties’, Russia’s securitization over the Ukrainian conflict frames the threat of an ‘illegitimate’ ‘junta’ backed by ‘nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites’, the US and the west, who are a threat to ‘all native Russians, the Russian-speaking people living in Ukraine’. Their act of securitization is enacted by authorizing the extraordinary

measure of Russian military force in Ukraine (REF/RL, 2014, March 1st). By attempting to legitimize and justify their own act of securitization, Russia also seeks to influence European and international audiences to delegitimize and dejustify NATO's act of securitization by getting them to subscribe to their own narrative in their securitization over the Ukrainian conflict and achieve information superiority. Putin continues;

'the Crimean authorities referred to the well-known Kosovo precedent – a precedent our western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now, was legitimate and did not require any permission from the country's central authorities. Pursuant to Article 2, Chapter 1 of the United Nations Charter, the UN International Court agreed with this approach and made the following comment in its ruling of July 22, 2010, and I quote: "No general prohibition may be inferred from the practice of the Security Council with regard to declarations of independence," and "General international law contains no prohibition on declarations of independence." Crystal clear, as they say.' (Kremlin, 2014, March 18th).

The argument that Kosovo's independence sets a 'precedent' is used by both Crimea and Russia, to argue that its position in the crisis is not threatening and is 'exactly what Crimea' is doing now. It follows 'a precedent our western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation' and is 'Pursuant to Article 2, Chapter 1 of the United Nations Charter'. Russia seeks to relativize and identify its position in the Ukrainian conflict as similar to the position of NATO during the Kosovo war and its subsequent independence, whereby an illegitimate 'junta' is threatening 'the Russian speaking population' and 'local defense units' who are seeking independence. Such a position, aided by Russia's strategically ambiguous attempted delegitimization of the Ukrainian leadership, and denial and rearticulation of NATO's constructed Russian military threat to create interpretational diversity, is aimed at normalising Russia's actions and support for separatists in Ukraine in the perceptions of its Russian and international audiences, as those that are in line with both the previous actions of NATO in Kosovo and precedent in international law. This downplays the notion of the Russian military as a threat to an 'an open, rules-based international system' and seeks to justify and legitimize Russia's position. Russian IAPW uses this relativisation in an attempt to

dejustify and delegitimise NATO's act of securitization, framing it as a hypocritical and aggressive actor and accusing it of advocating such actions based on precedent (RT, 2014, March 21st).

Thus Russia's use of strategic ambiguity in its act of securitization aims to create a failure of NATO's act of securitization, by delegitimizing the Ukrainian leadership and maintaining such an impression amongst its Russian and international audiences, and denying its military is a threat, rearticulating them as 'local defence units' to its European and Russian audiences, while it relativizes the Ukrainian leadership with a historical ideological threat, and its actions as those similar to a precedent set by NATO in international law in order to justify and legitimize its own act of securitization. In this sense, it can be argued that strategic ambiguity has been used to construct a purposefully desecuritizing Russian securitization, whereby the use of strategic ambiguity, assists Russia in simultaneously securitizing their own Russian audience and desecuritizing European and international audiences.

3.4. Russian counter securitization

As Watson (2009, p.32) states, in many cases the desecuritization of acts of securitization does not only take the form of desecuritization or alternate securitizations, but also in the process of 'counter securitization', where another threat seeks to either eclipse or replace the threat of the another securitizing actor. In cases of intervention, such as in Crimea, a securitizing or counter securitizing party will generally appeal on the international arena to the referent, such as NATO's claim to the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and Russia's claim to the rights of ethnic and cultural Russians self-determination (Barry Buzan et al., 1998, p.151). Russia's threat and referent discourse, which expands to include the wider European region in an attempt to replace the threat of the Russian military, can be accurately seen as counter securitization.

In its counter securitization to legitimize and justify its actions in Ukraine, Russia has focused on an ideological threat to a cultural ethnic based referent, appealing to both European and Russian audiences. The use of such terms as 'Nationalists', 'neo-Nazis',

‘Russophobes’ and ‘anti-Semites’ are a clear indication of Russia’s use of terms that attempt to engage the historical memories of the European and Russian populations, and characterise and elevate the perception of the threat in the context of a continued ideological one from World War Two where ‘the ideological heirs of Bandera, Hitler’s accomplice’ are a re-emergence of the threat of fascism (Poulsen, 2014). In Russia’s counter securitization, both this ideological threat and the referent of ‘all native Russians, the Russian-speaking people living in Ukraine’ expand to include wider Europe. As Putin states;

‘When I speak of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens I am referring to those people who consider themselves part of the broad Russian community, they may not necessarily be ethnic Russians, but they consider themselves Russian people.’ (Kremlin, 2014, July 1st)

‘Our country will continue to actively defend the rights of Russians, our compatriots abroad, using the entire range of available means – from political and economic to operations under international humanitarian law and the right of self-defence.’ (Kremlin, 2014, July 1st)

‘Regrettably, in some European countries the Nazi virus “vaccine” created at the Nuremberg Tribunal is losing its effect. This is clearly demonstrated by open manifestations of neo-Nazism that have already become commonplace in Latvia and other Baltic states. The situation in Ukraine, where nationalists and other radical groups provoked an anti-constitutional coup d’état in February, causes particular concern in this respect. Today, it is our shared duty to combat the glorification of Nazism. (Kremlin, 2014, October 15th)

The notion of ideological threats such as ‘nationalists’, ‘neo-Nazis’, ‘Russophobes’, ‘anti-Semites’ and ‘Nazism’ in Russia’s threat articulation both lacks clarity and meaning, due to the threat being largely unidentifiable, allowing Russia to pick and choose who it considers a threat. It can include a wide variety of interpretations by audiences, due to an individual’s ideological preferences being beholden to change, and people holding differing views in regards to what beliefs and actions constitute a given ideology. Notions of fascism could be interpreted as conservative individuals, radical

groups, states, or as Berzins (2014) states, Western liberalism or ideology itself. Thus strategic ambiguity in regards to Russia's counter securitization threat takes two forms. The use of language and discourse which may contain multiple meanings for interpretation, and the intentional lack of clarity and meaning in discourse to avoid certainty around specific issues. Such ideological threats are important in Russia's threat construction, as they are socially imbedded in both Europe and Russia's history, where the historical context of World War Two and its associated threats carry significant influential weight in Europe's collective memory.

Strategic ambiguity 3: Is the Russian military or ideology the greater threat?		
The Russian military is the greater threat.	Uncertain	Ideology is the greater threat.

Figure 7: Strategic ambiguity promotes unified diversity (Eisenberg, 1984)

Russia both expands its securitization threat and referent outside of Russia and Ukraine when it states that it considers Russians to be 'people who consider themselves part of the broad Russian community, they may not necessarily be ethnic Russians, but they consider themselves Russian people' and that they will 'actively defend the rights of Russians, our compatriots abroad, using the entire range of available means'. These statements insinuate that Russian's, or those who identify with them are under threat in Europe from 'open manifestations of neo-Nazism' in the 'Baltic states' and 'some European countries', and its Europe's 'shared duty' to 'combat the glorification of Nazism.'. Such a position highlights Russia's move from securitization, into that of counter securitization, whereby it seeks to replace the threat of its military (Figure 7), with that of an ambiguous ideological one revolving around notions of fascism.

The use of ambiguity and ideology in this regard to characterise the threat towards Russia serves a crucial process in its attempted counter securitization. As Kaufmann (1996a) states, in civil conflicts, the ability to either conform or influence involved populations in a given conflict varies depending on whether or not the conflict is either ideologically or ethnic based. He argues that ethnic based conflicts represent a power

struggle between different communities that see themselves as having distinct cultural heritages and ethnic identities; whereas ideological conflicts are struggles within a distinct community about how such a community should be governed. Thus in ideological conflicts, individual loyalties are amorphous, difficult to distinguish among the wider population, and are subject to change based on individual ideas and preferences in relation to the governing structure. This makes intervention in ideological conflicts very difficult, due to the inability to recognise who is the enemy, and having no distinct delimiting lines between the two sides of the conflict. This is highlighted by NATO's current concern of how to respond to such a conflict that uses AW and ideology, if an article 5 situation were to rise in a NATO member state that was an ideologically based conflict. Whereas in ethnic based conflicts, individual loyalties are rigid, highly distinguishable and are unlikely to change given an individual's cultural and ethnic background. Therefore in ideological based conflicts, the use of language and discourse serve as important weapons as competing sides in the conflict are attempting to mobilise, recruit and influence individuals from the same population in order to win the hearts and minds of targeted audiences to subscribe to their interpretation of the threat and conflict (Kaufmann, 1996b; Lockyer, 2011). As Russia has been able to characterise the threat in Ukraine and Europe as ideological, it can be argued that the ideological basis of this threat has aided their ability to pre-emptively desecuritize a potential NATO intervention in Ukraine by its decision makers, through constructing a strategically ambiguous threat in both its securitization and counter securitization.

Russia's attempt to characterise 'those who stood behind the latest events in Ukraine' as 'Nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites' backed by the US and the West, and the threatened referent as 'Russians' and 'those people who consider themselves part of the broad Russian community', ensures that it is able to maintain a maximum amount of influence over Russian ethnic and cultural populations in its securitization and counter securitization, while being able to maximise its influence over non-Russian ethnic and cultural populations in its counter securitization, by engaging and manipulating the BABE's of European audiences by appealing to their ideological preferences of governance. NATO's constructed securitized threat is the rigid, state based and clear threat of Russian military aggression. Thus it can be argued that Russia has been more successful in appealing to the ideological BABE's of its Western

European audiences, by using strategic ambiguity and ideology to construct their threat to appeal to a diverse range of ideological viewpoints, a variety of individuals from a variety of different ideological and political backgrounds who can all be engaged and influenced by the promotion of a unified diversity through the use of strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984). Pomerantsev and Weiss (2014) highlight this interpretational diversity, where Russian IAPW and strategic communications outlets such as RT, focus and target on appealing to the fringes of both sides of politics, conspiracy theorists and issue motivated groups, who may consider the European supranational governing structure, or as Berzins (2014) argues, the West, Western liberalism, the US, or far right wing groups and political organisations, a current problem in Europe, as ‘neo-fascist’ (Kremlin, 2014, July 22nd) or ‘Nazis’, allowing individuals to maintain their individual interpretations of the threat while believing that others are in agreement with them. By relativizing such a threat with the Ukrainian leadership, who are supported by Ukrainian radicals, the US, EU and the west, Russia is also able to influence such individuals to associate their diverse range of interpretations of the threat in regards to their interpretations of the Ukrainian government’s legitimacy.

The use of such language as ‘neo-fascist’ and ‘Nazism’ to describe Russia’s counter securitization threat are key embedded terms and themes in Western Europe’s and Russia’s historical collective memory, which increases the influential power of their ability to influence individuals (Lehti, Jutila, & Jokisipilä, 2008). Through their use, Russia are able to frame the context of the Ukrainian conflict as one which resembles and appeals to Western Europe’s and Russia’s historical BABE’s in relation to World War Two, and increase the power of both their articulation and Russia’s positional power as a counter securitizing actor, by relativizing such a threat and Russia’s position in regards to the Ukrainian conflict in both historical and current social contexts. As Putin highlights when he states ‘in some European countries the Nazi virus “vaccine” created at the Nuremberg Tribunal is losing its effect’, this historical context and threat articulation serves as both a naturally opposed threat, and facilitator for Western European desecuritization.

Whereas Western European accounts of World War Two have focused on the collective mourning for the victims of the Holocaust where virulent nationalism is portrayed as a

threat and post nationalism is favoured, Eastern European accounts of the war have focused on the atrocities that were committed against their nations from the ideology of communism, and the role of their nations as a vanguard against the persistent threat posed by Russia and the perceived uncivilised East. Such historical experiences and understandings of World War Two have made nationalism a strong part of the identity and political rhetoric of Eastern European nations (Kuljic, 2005). Their different historical collective memories in regards to World War two, particularly concerning their sympathy for Jewish suffering when compared with their own, and also the importance of nationalism for their social identity, makes the use of such terms, along with those of 'anti-Semites' and 'nationalists' to characterise the threat in Ukraine and Europe, influential in their ability to divide opinion socially within NATO member states in regards to whether 'neo-fascists', 'Nazis' or the 'glorification of Nazism' poses a threat. The context of the threat of historical and ever lingering 'fascism' and 'Nazism' in Europe, can potentially isolate Eastern European states, who may consider fascistic and anti-Semitic elements within their societies and political discourse as normal (Hockenos, 2013, p. 300), and in the eyes of Western European audiences, who are more influenced from the use of such terms in regards to threats, see the region as one from where threats may arise. Thus NATO's appeal to European audiences in their act of securitization, focusing on the historical threat of the Soviet Union's occupation of Europe, is more likely to engage the BABE's of Eastern European audiences who suffered from such an occupation, whereas Russia's appeals to the threats of 'neo-fascists', 'Nazis', 'anti-Semites' and 'nationalists' are more likely to engage the BABE's of audiences of key decision making Western European nations within NATO and the EU, such as Germany.

The positional power of Russia as an influential actor is also increased due to its ability to relativize Europe's current social climate with a historical context that echoes a situation whereby Russia has had to act historically to maintain European and its own security. As Russian nationhood, identity and dignity are largely built around the social narrative of their victory in World War Two and the perception of Russia as a vanguard against historical Western aggression (Dzyyadko, 2014; Uldricks, 2009), Russian society is easily securitized when their security is brought into question through such notions as 'neo-fascists' or 'Nazism' (Lehti, Jutila, & Jokisipilä, 2008). This is

highlighted by Roshwald (2006, p. 122), who argues that national dignity and security are inherently intertwined, whereby the questioning of the narrative of the nation also brings into question the identity and dignity of its citizens and those who identify with such a narrative. During the Ukrainian conflict, Russia's national dignity and identity has been brought into question. The rejection of the Russian led Customs and Eurasian Union, in favour of European integration, a change of government who are non-representative of Russia's interests, the toppling of Soviet era monuments which symbolize Russia's national sacrifice during World War Two, the attempted removal of the Russian language as an official one in Ukraine, and the designation of Russia as an adversary rather than a partner by NATO, all culminate to create an environment of perceived threats against the dignity, identity and wellbeing of the Russian state, which leads subsequently to the ease of its securitization. The threat of 'Nationalists', 'neo-Nazis', 'neo-fascists' and 'Nazism' in Ukraine and Europe is relativized by Russia to be representative of both the crimes of the Nazis of the past, and the current rise of xenophobia, anti-Semitism and right wing politics throughout Europe. As Putin states;

'... and in a year's time will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War, the victory over Nazism and fascism. This is still relevant today, as we can see. I will not cite the numerous examples now, but this is a real problem today.' (Kremlin, 2014, April 24th)

While largely overblown in its discourse and IAPW, the mixing of a small amount of present day truth with a historically based threat, gives Russia an empirical platform from where they are able to argue that what is happening in Ukraine, is also threatening Europe, just as it has done in the past (Poulsen, 2014). Its historical defense against fascist, Nazis, nationalists and the German onslaught during World War Two, had left Russia and the Soviet Union in an authoritative and influential position in post war European security and stability (Croft & Williams, 1992, p. 77). Through its use of a threat that has historical context based in World War Two, and is related to both threats past and present, Russia's positional power as an influential actor is increased, due to it being able to justifying and relativize its current position in Ukraine with its historical defense against such threats, from which historically it has had to act to maintain European security and stability.

4. Results and conclusion

4.1. Summary

Russia's process of desecuritization has focused on both attempting to create a failure of NATO's act of securitization and also replacing the threat posed by its military to Europe with an ideological threat, revolving the around the notions of 'fascism' and 'Nazism' through its counter securitization. It has constructed the strategy of strategic ambiguity in three distinct ways. It has refused to either deny or confirm their recognition of the Ukrainian leadership under Petro Poroschenko, allowing its international audiences to maintain their existing impressions in regards to its legitimacy, and their IAPW to continue to insinuate that it is illegitimate. It has used AW and the concealment of its troops to engage in deniability, allowing Russia to rearticulate NATO's constructed threat of Russian military aggression and intervention as not that of their own doing, but that of locals and civilians in Ukraine. This has allowed Russia's IAPW to deny NATO the use of imagery in its act of securitization, and use images of suffering civilians, local separatists, and Ukrainian radicals for the purposes of desecuritization. And it has used an ambiguous ideological threat that is embedded in both Europe and Russia's historical memory to appeal to and foster a diverse range of ideological viewpoints amongst its European audiences in attempting to replace NATO's Russian military threat, with its IAPW targeting the fringes of both sides of the political divide, conspiracy theorists and issue motivated groups to allow for a unified diversity and multiple interpretations of the threat.

Its use of strategic ambiguity to foster the perception of an illegitimate Ukrainian leadership, backed by ideological extremists, the US and the West, and deniability of their military forces to allow for a relativist view of them as local civilian separatists, allows for multiple interpretations and uncertainty in their understanding by Russia's European and international audiences in regards to the threats and referents of NATO and Russia's competing securitizations, whereby Russia can relativize the conflict in Ukraine with the conflict of Kosovo, arguing that is actions and support for separatists in the country, is the same as NATO's actions and support for separatists in Kosovo,

where it has set the precedent for such actions to happen. This argument attempts to delegitimise and dejustify NATO's act of securitization, whereby the notion of a Russian military threat to an 'open, rules-based international system' is unfounded, and the support for separatists against illegitimate regimes is the new norm set by the Kosovo precedent in the international system of relations and law.

It's shaping of the context of the Ukrainian conflict, using an ambiguous ideological threat that appeals to and engages a diverse range of ideological viewpoints to be unified in diversity, is relativized in both a historical context of World War 2 and current social context of rising xenophobia and right wing politics in Europe. This allows Russia to take advantage of the social embeddedness of this threat, increasing the power of its threat articulation, as ideological notions revolving around the threat of 'fascism' and 'Nazism' serve as both a natural facilitator for Western European desecuritization and Russian securitization, and potentially divide Western and Eastern Europe societies in their interpretation of it. Russia's positional power is also increased by relativizing this threat in Ukraine, as one that is also visible in Europe, giving Russia an empirical platform to argue for their defense against this threat, just as they have done in the past.

As a tactic for desecuritization, Russia's use of strategic ambiguity serves to both foster multiple interpretations of a given issue from where an alternative narrative can be more successfully articulated or rearticulated, and uses a counter threat that makes diverse targeted audiences more unified in their interpretation of it, and more likely to engage an alternative narrative. By fostering multiple interpretations of threats and referents, strategic ambiguity also creates division. The attempt to create interpretational division of the conflict in Ukraine takes two levels. Socially between mainstream society and ideologically and issue motivated individuals and groups, who are more likely to engage in a unified diversity and consider a range of actors such as the Ukrainian leadership, other ideological groups, the US, the EU and the West as 'neo fascists' or 'Nazis', and geographically between Western and Eastern European nations, through differing historical threat perceptions engrained in their historical collective memories.

4.2. Results

The success of the use of strategic ambiguity in Russia's desecuritization is a difficult one to measure. While it has been shown in this research that strategic ambiguity has been constructed to foster multiple interpretations of threats and referents, and how this strategic ambiguity has been used to influence its targeted audiences, there are many variables which serve to influence an audience's perceptions and BABE's in relation to the conflict in Ukraine, just as there are many variables that influence the process of desecuritization. These variables can range from media penetration and reach, geo political realities, historical relations and differences, political relations, to the differing BABE's of individuals. When measured in the context of the ability to desecuritize NATO's act of securitization, the overall strategy of using strategic ambiguity as a tactic to desecuritize can be measured. Using Salter's (2008) chain of measurement which focuses on the degree to which policies and opinions accords with the process of securitization, it can be argued that Russia's strategically ambiguous desecuritization has achieved mixed results.

Extraordinary political and economic measures have been taken by NATO, the US and the EU, yet no emergency powers have been accorded to NATO. All of NATO's securitization actions fall in the category of extraordinary measures taken, rather than emergency powers forwarded. It could be argued that Russia's use of AW, its characterisation of the threat in Ukraine and Europe as an ambiguous ideological one, and its securitized referent as a cultural ethnic one, has successfully contributed to pre-emptively desecuritizing a potential NATO intervention in the Ukrainian conflict, convincing its decision makers that such an intervention would be too difficult and too costly. This is highlighted by NATO's concern of how to respond should such similar AW and strategic ambiguity be used in a conflict against a NATO member country, particularly the Baltic States of Estonia and Latvia who have significant Russian ethnic minorities.

In a recent report by the Polish think tank Institute of Public Affairs (Kucharczyk, 2015); the report focuses on analysing population perceptions in relations between Russia, Poland and Germany in relation to the Ukrainian conflict. In analysing the perception of the Russian military as a threat, the report found that 76% of Poles and

only 41% of Germans perceived the Russian military as a threat. As in 2008 77% of Poles perceived Russia as a military threat, it can be argued that Russia's attempted desecuritization in Poland has been ineffective. Germany's lack of a Russian military threat perception is part of worrisome trend in the country, considering a Harris poll (FT, 2008, September 22nd) found 50% of the country would oppose national troops going to the defense of the three Baltic States. The same Institute of Public Affairs report also found that 61% of Poles blame Russia for the conflict, 20% believe that both Russia and Ukraine are responsible for the conflict, and 6% blame Ukraine, while 39% of Germans blame Russia for the conflict, 43% believe that both Russia and Ukraine are responsible for the conflict and 10% blame Ukraine. Such a difference in perceptions in regards to both Russia as a threat and who holds responsibility for the conflict highlights the influence of the historical context in threat perception. The differing historical threat perceptions of both nations in regards to the context of post-World War Two Europe is able to be taken advantage of in Russia's strategically ambiguous attempted desecuritization and counter securitization by focusing on the counter threat of 'neo fascists' and 'Nazism', and its relativisation with the Ukrainian government, to serve as a natural facilitator for the desecuritization of German society and other Western European states that are more likely to be influenced and desecuritized through such a historical context than Eastern European nations. With a low threat perception of the Russian military and higher blame of both Russia and Ukraine for the conflict than simply Russia alone, it could be argued that Russia's attempt to desecuritize and replace the threat of its military with that of an ideological threat that revolves around the historical threat of 'fascism' and 'Nazism', has had some degree of success in being able to stigmatise the Ukrainian leadership and increase the perception of 'neo fascists' and 'Nazism' as a potential threat in Germany and other Western European nations.

The report found that 76% of Poles and 67% of Germans also believed that economic sanctions against Russia should either be kept in place or strengthened, indicating that extraordinary measures by NATO and the EU against Russia are still widely supported among European audiences, and that Russia's attempt to return relations to a 'business as usual' approach with NATO and the EU has been unsuccessful.

Russia has also been unsuccessful in desecuritizing NATO's Russian military threat to decision makers in regards to it being a part of a wider political debate, with recent motions in the EU parliament still stressing and condemning the threat the Russian military poses by its actions in Ukraine (EU Parliament, 2015, January 12th), and NATO still condemning 'Russia's aggressive actions' (NATO, 2015, May 13th).

Thus it can be argued that Russia's strategically ambiguous attempted desecuritization against NATO and EU decision makers has achieved some degree of success, by aiding the limitation of the possible emergence of emergency security powers, yet largely unsuccessful in its ability to remove the Russian military threat out of a threat defence sequence in the political sphere. It can also be argued that it has achieved success in influencing the perceptions and BABE's of Western European audiences in regards to both reducing threat perceptions of the Russian military, and replacing it with an ideological threat that revolves around the notions of 'fascism' and 'Nazism', however both Western and Eastern European populations still largely support extraordinary measures that have been put in to place. Thus it can be argued that Russia has been unsuccessful in its attempted desecuritization of NATO's act of securitization, and has thus far been unable to return to a 'business as usual' approach.

The strength of this research lay in its ability to be able to identify and analyse how Russia has constructed and used strategic ambiguity to influence targeted audiences for the purposes and process of desecuritization. Yet it is limited by its inability to successfully conclude if the use of strategic ambiguity has been the factor that has successfully influenced for the purposes and process of desecuritization. For this, further quantitative research is needed in regards to the perceptions and BABE's of Russia's European and international audiences as to how they perceive the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government, the identity of forces on the ground in Ukraine and current threat perceptions in Europe to more accurately determine the ability of strategic ambiguity to be used as a tactic for desecuritization. However the potential for such research is also limited, due to the difficulty in measuring such variables before and after a securitization and desecuritization scenario takes place that uses strategic ambiguity without the previous anticipation and knowledge of its occurrence to determine a change in specific perceptions.

While largely unsuccessful in desecuritizing NATO's act of securitization, it can be argued that strategic ambiguity has had success in being able to influence the perceptions and BABE's of its targeted audiences, specifically those in Western Europe. High levels of anti-Americanism, opposition to the EU and diverse issue motivated groups in the region who can be influenced by the historical threat of fascism, makes its populations more likely to be influenced by Russia's use of strategic ambiguity in their IAPW and strategic communications. Russia's use of the counter securitization threat and context of 'fascists' and 'Nazism' and its association with the Ukrainian government, who are backed by radicals, the US, the EU and the West, allows for such diverse perceptions to be united through strategic ambiguity using terms which can be considered and perceived as a common threat, and divide Western European opinion socially, and the continent geographically as to the legitimacy of the Ukrainian leadership and the greater threat faced in Europe. This is compounded by the difficulty in justifying a Russian military threat to Western Europe, especially when the degree of involvement of the Russian military in the Ukrainian conflict is uncertain, the AW being waged in Ukraine is a low level conflict, and their geographic security is buffered by Eastern Europe. The ability of strategic ambiguity to divide threat perceptions in Western Europe, given time, could greatly assist in the desecuritization of the region and a return to a 'business as usual' approach with Russia.

4.3. Recommendations

This research has shown how strategic ambiguity has been constructed within Russia's political discourse, AW campaign, and IAPW in order to influence targeted audiences. Thus in developing policies, doctrines and tactics to be able to successfully safeguard NATO and its member states from the ability of strategic ambiguity to be used as a tactic for desecuritization, NATO needs to focus on measures that either restrict the number of potential interpretations in regards to attempts to delegitimise and dejustify its threats to referents, or use strategic ambiguity to increase their own potential interpretations that counters desecuritization and appeals to diverse range of viewpoints for their securitized audiences in order to attempt to counter the division of interpretations of given issues. These measures should specifically target Russian ethnic

and cultural audiences and conspiracy minded, issue motivated and fringe political groups within Europe and the international arena that are more likely to be influenced by Russia's strategic ambiguity and IAPW tactics.

Strategic ambiguity itself is a difficult strategy to counter, due to it being dependent on a sender's intention and an individual's interpretation. A greater willingness from NATO to engage in a more aggressive IAPW campaign aimed at desecuritizing Russian audiences is an area that is severely lacking when compared with Russia's ability to be able to project its own interests and narratives, specifically in Europe and the US through its growing reach and number of instruments for IAPW and strategic communications such as RT. A much more purposeful and engaging campaign is needed in this area, that has the capability to be able to influence and engage both European and Russian audiences to counter balance Russia's current ability of being able to so easily securitize and unify its own population and create opposition within NATO member states for the purposes of desecuritization.

A much broader educational approach for European audiences, particularly ethnic and cultural Russians who are more easily threatened by Russia's use of an ambiguous ideological threat and cultural ethnic referent, is also needed in regards to how Russia consistently uses a strategically ambiguous ideological threat revolving around the notions of fascism and Nazism for the purposes of securitization and desecuritization. Its ability to engage audiences by relativising historical and current threats and also Russia's historical and current actions is an issue the wider public should understand so as to restrict Russia from engaging the BABE's of its targeted audiences through historical and social context. By educating the public on this issue, this will limit Russia's ability to desecuritize European audiences and its capability to be able to justify and legitimise its potential future conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

References

- Aldis, A. C., & McDermott, R. N. (2004). *Russian Military Reform, 1992-2002*: Taylor & Francis.
- Alker, H. R. (2006). On securitization politics as contexted texts and talk1. *Journal of International relations and Development*, 9(1), 70-80.
- Aradau, C. (2004). Security and the democratic scene: desecuritization and emancipation. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 7(4), 388-413.
- Arquilla, J. (1999). Ethics and information warfare. *RAND-PUBLICATIONS-MR-ALL SERIES-*, 379-402.
- Balzacq, T. (2005). The three faces of securitization: Political agency, audience and context. *European journal of international relations*, 11(2), 171-201.
- Balzacq, T. (2014). *Contesting Security: Strategies and Logics*: Routledge.
- Benson, B. V., & Niou, E. M. (2000). Comprehending strategic ambiguity: US policy toward the Taiwan Strait security issue. *Unpublished paper, Department of Political Science, Duke University*.
- Bērziņš, J. (2014). *RUSSIA'S NEW GENERATION WARFARE IN UKRAINE: IMPLICATIONS FOR LATVIAN DEFENSE POLICY*. National Defence Academy of Latvia: Centre for Security and Strategic Research.
- Bidder, B. (2013). Russia Today: Putin's weapon in the war of the images. *Spiegel Online*. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/putin-fights-war-of-images-and-propaganda-with-russia-today-channel-a-916162.html>
- Breedlove, P., M. . (2014). The meaning of Russia's military campaign against Ukraine. . *The Wall Street Journal*. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/phil-breedlove-the-meaning-of-russias-military-campaign-against-ukraine-1405552018>
- Breeze, R. (2013). Critical discourse analysis and its critics. *Pragmatics*, 21(4).
- Buzan, B., & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & De Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a new framework for analysis*: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Chekinov, S., G. , & Bogdanov, S., A. (2013). The Nature and Content of a New Generation War. *Military Thought*(4), 12 - 23.
- Committee, U. K. H. o. C. D. (2014). Defence Committee - Third Report. Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two-NATO. . <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/358/35802.htm>
- Croft, S., & Williams, P. (1992). *European Security Without the Soviet Union*: F. Cass.
- Darczewska, J. (2014). *The anatomy of Russian information warfare. The Crimean operation, a case study*. OSW Point of View.
- Defence, U. K. M. o. (2013). Joint Doctrine Note 2/13. Information Superiority. .
- Denis, J.-L., Dompierre, G., Langley, A., & Rouleau, L. (2011). Escalating Indecision: Between Reification and Strategic Ambiguity. *Organization Science*, 22(1), 225-244.
- Downes, R. (1999). Landpower and Ambiguous Warfare: The Challenge of Colombia in the 21st Century: DTIC Document.
- Dzyadko, T. (2014). Putin is using WW11 for Propaganda Because It's the Best Memory That Russia Has. *New Republic*. <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/117479/russia-world-war-ii-victory-putins-obsession>

- Eisenberg, E. M. (1984). Ambiguity as strategy in organizational communication. *Communication monographs*, 51(3), 227-242.
- EU Parliament (2015, January 12th). Motion for a resolution on the situation in Ukraine – B8-0029/2015. Retrieved from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+B8-2015-0029+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Fairclough, N. L. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study Language*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Fako, E. (2012). *Strategies of Desecuritization*. Central European University.
- FitzGerald, M. C. (1994). The Russian military's strategy for "sixth generation" warfare. *Orbis*, 38(3), 457-476.
- Friedman, G. (2007). Beyond Fourth Generation Warfare. *The Officer: Reserve Officers Association National Security Report*, 57-60.
- Frunzeti, T. (2013). Asymmetric, Unconventional and Hybrid Actions in 21st Century Warfare. *Strategic Impact*, 46(1).
- FT (Producer). (2008). Europeans see Moscow as security threat. Retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4530e1dc-88f0-11dd-a179-0000779fd18c.html#axzz3ZmEkHtbN>
- General, G. o. P. E. r. t. t. N. S. (2014). Collective Defence and Common Security: Twin Pillars of the Atlantic Alliance. http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140606_140602-peg-collective_defence.pdf
- Giles, K. (2011). "Information Troops"-A Russian Cyber Command? Paper presented at the Cyber Conflict (ICCC), 2011 3rd International Conference on.
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods: A-L ; Vol. 2, M-Z Index*: SAGE.
- Goble, P. (1999). Russia: Analysis From Washington – A Real Battle On The Virtual Front. *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1092360.html>
- Goodall, B., Trethewey, A., & McDonald, K. (2006). Strategic ambiguity, communication, and public diplomacy in an uncertain world: Principles and practices. *Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University*, 1-14.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1), 3-35.
- Hammes, T. X. (2007). Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, FIFTH EMERGES. *Military Review*, 87(3), 14-23.
- Hansen, L. (2012). Reconstructing desecuritisation: the normative-political in the Copenhagen School and directions for how to apply it. *Review of International Studies*, 38(03), 525-546.
- Harris, F. C. (2006). It takes a tragedy to arouse them: Collective memory and collective action during the civil rights movement. *Social movement studies*, 5(1), 19-43.
- Heickerö, R. (2010). *Emerging Cyber Threats and Russian Views on Information Warfare and Information Operations*: Defence Analysis, Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI).
- Hockenos, P. (2013). *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*: Taylor & Francis.
- Hom, S. K., & Yamamoto, E. K. (1999). Collective memory, history, and social justice. *UCLA L. Rev.*, 47, 1747.
- Hutchby, I. (2001). Oh', irony and sequential ambiguity in arguments. *Discourse & Society*, 12(2), 123-141.

- Hutchinson, W. (2002). Concepts in information warfare. *Logistics Information Management*, 15(5/6), 410-413.
- Hutchinson, W., & Warren, M. (2001). Principles of information warfare. *Journal of Information Warfare*, 1(1), 1-6.
- Huysmans, J. (1995). *Migrants as a security problem: dangers of 'securitizing' societal issues*: na
- Huysmans, J. (1998). The question of the limit: Desecuritisation and the aesthetics of horror in political realism. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 27(3), 569-+.
- Hyslop, M. (2014). *Obstructive Marketing: Restricting Distribution of Products and Services in the Age of Asymmetric Warfare*: Ashgate Publishing, Limited.
- Influence. (Ed.) (2015) Merriam Webster.
- Janks, H. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329-342. doi: 10.1080/0159630970180302
- Jones, A., Jones, A., Kovacich, G. L., & Luzwick, P. G. (2002). *Global Information Warfare: How Businesses, Governments, and Others Achieve Objectives and Attain Competitive Advantages*: Taylor & Francis.
- Jutila, M. (2006). Desecuritizing minority rights: Against determinism. *Security Dialogue*, 37(2), 167-185.
- Kaufmann, C. (1996a). Intervention in ethnic and ideological civil wars: Why one can be done and the other can't. *Security Studies*, 6(1), 62-101.
- Kaufmann, C. (1996b). Possible and impossible solutions to ethnic civil wars. *International security*, 20(4), 136-175.
- Kipp, W., J., McDermott, R. . (2014). Putin's Smart Defense: Wars, Rumors of War, and Generations of Wars. *The Jamestown foundation. Eurasian Daily Monitor*.
http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42512&no_cache=1#.VM4G1GiUc9Y
- Kucharczyk, J., Lada, A., Scholer, G., Wenerski, L. (2015). Close together or far apart? Poles, Germans and Russians on the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Institute of Public Affairs. The Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- Kuljic, T. (2005). Revised History and New Identity in East Europe. *Identities - Journal for Politics, Gender, and Culture*, 4, 63 - 86.
- Lehti, M., Jutila, M., & Jokisipilä, M. (2008). Never-ending Second World War: Public performances of national dignity and the drama of the Bronze soldier. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 39(4), 393-418.
- Leitch, S., & Davenport, S. (2007). Strategic ambiguity as a discourse practice: the role of keywords in the discourse on 'sustainable' biotechnology. *Discourse Studies*, 9(1), 43-61.
- Lester, P. M. (2006). *Syntactic theory of visual communication*. Retrieved from
<http://blog.kareldonk.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SyntacticTheoryofVisualCommunication.pdf>
- Libicki, M. C. (1995). What is information warfare? : DTIC Document.
- Lind, W. S., Nightengale, K., Schmitt, J. F., Sutton, J. W., & Wilson, G. I. (1989). The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation. *Marine Corps Gazette (pre-1994)*, 73(10), 22-26.
- Linkevicius, L. (2014). Social media update. . *Twitter*.
<https://twitter.com/linkevicius/status/442607548303425536>
- Lockyer, A. (2011). Foreign Intervention and warfare in civil wars. *Review of International Studies*, 37(05), 2337-2364.
- Manis, M. (1961). The interpretation of opinion statements as a function of message ambiguity and recipient attitude. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63, 76-81

- McDonald, M. (2008). Securitization and the Construction of Security. *European journal of international relations*, 14(4), 563-587.
- Murphy, D. M. (2008). The trouble with strategic communication (s): DTIC Document.
- NATO. (1997). *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm.
- NATO. (2015, May 15th). Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_119430.htm?selectedLocale=en
- Paul, J., & Strbiak, C. A. (1997). The ethics of strategic ambiguity. *Journal of Business Communication*, 34(2), 149-159.
- Pomerantsev, P., Weiss, M. . (2014). The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money. A Special Report presented by the Interpreter *Institute of Modern Russia*.
http://imrussia.org/media/pdf/Research/Michael_Weiss_and_Peter_Pomerantsev_The_Menace_of_Unreality.pdf
- Poulsen, N., B. (2014). The Past as Strategy - Russia and its use of history in the Ukraine conflict. *Contemporary Conflicts*. Royal Danish Defence College.
- Reding, A., Weed, K., & Ghez, J. J. (2010). NATO's Strategic Communications concept and its relevance for France.
- Roshwald, A. (2006). *The endurance of nationalism: ancient roots and modern dilemmas*: Cambridge University Press.
- RFE/RL (Producer). (2014, March 1st). Parliament OKs Putin Request To Use Russian Forces In Ukraine. . Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-crimea-forces-russian/25281291.html>
- RT (Producer). (2014, March 21st). Facts only: Kosovo vs Crimea - 'Good Independence' vs 'Bad Referendum'. Retrieved from <http://rt.com/news/kosovo-crimea-referendum-recognition-441/>
- RT (Producer). (2014, May 3rd). Over ten shot dead by Right Sector radicals near Slavyansk in Eastern Ukraine. Retrieved from <http://rt.com/news/156584-right-sector-deaths-ukraine/>
- RT (Producer). (2014, September 30th). Ukraine authorities in massive 'Rename Soviet Places' drive. Retrieved from <http://rt.com/news/191784-kiev-soviet-streets-renaming/>
- Rumelili, B. (2014). *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*: Taylor & Francis.
- Salter, M. B. (2008). Securitization and desecuritization: a dramaturgical analysis of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11(4), 321-349.
- Santos, S. J. (2010). Peace, Media and the de-securitization of post-conflict societies. *SGIR, Stockholm, September*
- Schenk, T. (2014). Crisis in Ukraine: What is NATO's role? . *The Atlantic Council of Canada*.
<http://natocouncil.ca/crisis-in-ukraine-what-is-natos-role/>
- Schmid, A. (2005). Terrorism as psychological warfare. *Democracy and Security*, 1(2), 137-146.
- Sim, A. B., & Fernando, M. (2010). Strategic ambiguity and ethical actions.
- Smith, S. W., Atkin, C. K., & Roznowski, J. (2006). Are "Drink Responsibly" Alcohol Campaigns Strategically Ambiguous? *Health Communication*, 20(1), 1-11.
- Sneijder, P., & Te Molder, H. F. (2005). Moral logic and logical morality: Attributions of responsibility and blame in online discourse on veganism. *Discourse & Society*, 16(5), 675-696.
- Staff, U. J. C. o. (2003). Joint Publication 3-53. Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations.

- Staff, U. J. C. o. (2010). Joint Publication 3-13.2. Psychological Operations.
- Steinberg, M. W. (1998). Tilting the frame: Considerations on collective action framing from a discursive turn. *Theory and Society*, 27(6), 845-872.
- Stephenson, P., & Gilbert, K. (1999). *Investigating Computer-Related Crime*: CRC Press.
- Stritzel, H. (2007). Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond. *European journal of international relations*, 13(3), 357-383,449.
- Taddeo, M. (2012). Information warfare: A philosophical perspective. *Philosophy & Technology*, 25(1), 105-120.
- Tatham, S. (2013). US Governmental Information Operations and Strategic Communications: A Discredited Tool or User Failure? Implications for Future Conflict: DTIC Document.
- Taureck, R. (2006). Securitization theory and securitization studies. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 9(1), 53-61.
- Thomas, T. (2014). Russia's Information Warfare Strategy: Can the Nation Cope in Future Conflicts? *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 27(1), 101-130.
- Thomas, T. L. (1999). Human network attacks. *Military Review*, 79(5), 23.
- Tomes, R. R. (2004). Relearning counterinsurgency warfare. *Parameters*, 34(1), 16.
- Treadwell, M. B. (1998). When Does a Act of Information Warfare Become an Act of War? Ambiguity in Perception: DTIC Document.
- Uldricks, T. J. (2009). War, politics and memory: Russian historians reevaluate the origins of World War II. *History & Memory*, 21(2), 60-82.
- United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee, O. E. (2014). Defence Committee - Third Report. Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two-NATO. . <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/defence-committee/towards-the-next-defence-and-security-review-part-two-nato/oral/11261.pdf>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. (pp. 352-371). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1989). Structures of discourse and structures of power. *Communication yearbook*, 12, 18-59.
- Von Clausewitz, C., Howard, M., & Paret, P. (1989). *On War*: Princeton University Press.
- Watson, S. D. (2009). *The Securitization of Humanitarian Migration: Digging Moats and Sinking Boats*: Taylor & Francis.
- Wæver, O. (1995). 'Securitisation and Desecuritisation', in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ed ., *On Security*, 46 – 86, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Weiss, G., Wodak, R. (2002). Introduction: Theory, interdisciplinarity and critical discourse analysis. In G. Weiss and R. Wodak (eds.), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Williams, M. C. (2003). Words, images, enemies: securitization and international politics. *International studies quarterly*, 47(4), 511-531.
- Williams, P. A. (2010). *Information Warfare: Time for a redefinition*. Paper presented at the 11th Australian Information Warfare Conference.
- Герасимов, В. (2013). необходимо перосмыслить формы и способы ведения боевых действий. *Военно-промышленный курьер*, 8(476). http://vpk-news.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/VPK_08_476.pdf
- Russian article by General Valery Gerasimov in February 27th, 2013 "Military-Industrial Kurier" translated by Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty editor Robert Coalson. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/robert-coalson/russian-military-doctrine-article-by-general-valery-gerasimov/10152184862563597>

NATO speeches and transcripts

- NATO. (2014, February 26th). *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Defence Ministers session*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_107408.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, March 2nd). *Doorstep statement by the NATO Secretary General before the meetings of the North Atlantic Council and the NATO-Ukraine Commission*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_107663.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, March 19th). *"Why NATO Matters to America" - Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Brookings Institution*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108087.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, March 21st). *"A strong NATO in a changed world" - Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the "Brussels Forum"*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108215.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, April 1st). *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the first day of meetings of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108511.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, April 4th). *"A new strategic reality in Europe" - Speech by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow to the 21st International Conference on Euro-Atlantic Security, Krakow, Poland*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108889.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, April 8th). *Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the NATO Transformation Seminar, Paris*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108909.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, April 11th). *Remarks by Assistant Secretary General Kolinda Grabar at the Kyiv Security Forum*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_109120.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, April 30th). *Remarks by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the Atlantic Council of the United States Conference "Toward a Europe whole and free", Washington DC*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_109419.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, May 9th). *"Defending Allies, Sharing responsibility, Upholding values" - Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Tallinn University, Estonia*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_109757.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, September 4th). *Joint press conference by the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko during the NATO Summit held in Newport, Wales*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_112483.htm?selectedLocale=en.
- NATO. (2014, September 5th). *Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and Government during the NATO Wales Summit*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_112871.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Kremlin speeches and transcripts

- Kremlin. (2014, March 4th). *Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366>.
- Kremlin. (2014, March 18th). *Address by President of the Russian Federation*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.
- Kremlin. (2014, April 17th). *Direct Line with Vladimir Putin* Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20796>.
- Kremlin. (2014, April 24th). *Media Forum of Independent Local and Regional Media*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20858>.
- Kremlin. (2014, June 4th). *Vladimir Putin's interview with Radio Europe 1 and TF1 TV channel*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45832>.
- Kremlin. (2014, July 1st). *Conference of Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46131>.
- Kremlin. (2014, July 22nd). *Security Council meeting*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46305>.
- Kremlin. (2014, October 15th). *Interview to Politika newspaper*. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46806>.